

THE KITTREDGE SHAKESPEARES

65c

Much Ado About Nothing

Edited by George Lyman Kittredge / *Revised by Irving Ribner*



#1237

34.65

308E

1989588

COPYRIGHT © 1967 BY BLAISDELL PUBLISHING COMPANY,
A DIVISION OF GINN AND COMPANY.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

PREVIOUS EDITION COPYRIGHT © 1941 BY GEORGE LYMAN KITTREDGE.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER: 67-16471

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

3-19-80
LF

[DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON PEDRO, *Prince of Arragon.*

DON JOHN, *his bastard brother.*

CLAUDIO, *a young lord of Florence.*

BENEDICK, *a young lord of Padua.*

LEONATO, *Governor of Messina.*

ANTONIO, *an old man, his brother.*

BALTHASAR, *attendant on DON PEDRO.*

BORACHIO, } *followers of DON JOHN.*
CONRADE, }

FRIAR FRANCIS.

DOGBERRY, *a Constable.*

VERGES, *a Headborough.*

A Sexton.

A Boy.

HERO, *daughter to LEONATO.*

BEATRICE, *niece to LEONATO.*

MARGARET, } *waiting gentlewomen attending on HERO.*
URSULA, }

Messengers, Watch, Attendants, &c.

SCENE. — *Messina.*]

Act One



SCENE I. [*An orchard before Leonato's house.*]

Enter Leonato (Governor of Messina), Hero (his Daughter), and Beatrice (his Niece), with a Messenger.

LEON. I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Arragon comes
this night to Messina.

MESS. He is very near by this. He was not three leagues off
when I left him.

LEON. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action? 5

MESS. But few of any sort, and none of name.

LEON. A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home
full numbers. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed
much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio.

MESS. Much deserv'd on his part, and equally rememb'rd by 10
Don Pedro. He hath borne himself beyond the promise
of his age, doing in the figure of a lamb the feats of a
lion. He hath indeed better bett'rd expectation than
you must expect of me to tell you how.

LEON. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much 15
glad of it.

I.I. 1 *Don Pedro* ROWE; Q, F¹: "Don Peter." 5 *this action* this recent battle. Against whom Don Pedro has been conducting a campaign we are not informed, since the question is of no importance in the play [K]. 6 *sort* rank. *name* great reputation. 10 *equally rememb'rd* rewarded to the same extent. 11 *Pedro* ROWE; Q, F¹: "Peter." 15 *will* that will. The ellipsis of a relative pronoun in the nominative is still common in rapid speech [K].

- MESS. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him; even so much that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.
- LEON. Did he break out into tears? 20
- MESS. In great measure.
- LEON. A kind overflow of kindness. There are no faces truer than those that are so wash'd. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping!
- BEAT. I pray you, is Signior Mountanto return'd from the wars or no? 25
- MESS. I know none of that name, lady. There was none such in the army of any sort.
- LEON. What is he that you ask for, niece?
- HERO. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua. 30
- MESS. O, he's return'd, and as pleasant as ever he was.
- BEAT. He set up his bills here in Messina and challeng'd Cupid at the flight, and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscrib'd for Cupid and challeng'd him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he kill'd and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he kill'd? For indeed I promised to eat all of his killing. 35
- LEON. Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

18-19 *joy could . . . of bitterness* joy could not show itself with becoming moderation unless it wore the sign of sorrow; or, in plain language, unless he had burst into tears, his joy would have been beyond control [κ]. *modest* moderate. 22 *kind* natural. *kindness* human feeling. 25 *Signior Mountanto* "Montanto" or "montant" was a technical term for an upright blow or thrust in fencing [κ]. 31 *pleasant* jocular. 32 *set up his bills* made public announcement; literally, put up written notices, as one might do in making a public challenge. 33 *at the flight* to an archery contest. 34 *subscrib'd* for signed up as substitute for. *bird-bolt* a short blunt-headed arrow used to shoot birds. Being less dangerous than the long-distance arrow, it could be used both by fools and children. It is thus appropriate to both the fool and Cupid (POPE; Q, κ: "burbolt"). 37 *to eat all of his killing* A proverbial turn of phrase, indicating that none would be killed [κ]. 38 *tax* censure. 39 *meet* even. 41 *holp* helped. 42 *trencherman* eater. 43 *stomach* (a) appetite (b) courage. 45 *to a lady* in comparison with a lady. 48 *stuff'd man* a mere figure of a man — clothes stuffed to resemble a living being [κ].

- MESS. He hath done good service, lady, in these wars. 40
- BEAT. You had musty victual, and he hath help to eat it. He is a very valiant trencherman; he hath an excellent stomach.
- MESS. And a good soldier too, lady.
- BEAT. And a good soldier to a lady; but what is he to a lord? 45
- MESS. A lord to a lord, a man to a man; stuff'd with all honourable virtues.
- BEAT. It is so indeed. He is no less than a stuff'd man; but for the stuffing — well, we are all mortal.
- LEON. You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There is a kind of 50 merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her. They never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them.
- BEAT. Alas, he gets nothing by that! In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man govern'd with one; so that if he have wit enough to keep 55 himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse; for it is all the wealth that he hath left to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.
- MESS. Is't possible? 60
- BEAT. Very easily possible. He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.

48-9 *but for . . . mortal* but, as to what he's actually made of (what qualities of mind and character he is, as you call it "stuffed with") — well, perhaps he's no worse than the general run of us poor human creatures [κ]. 54 *five wits* These were generally enumerated as common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, and memory. *halting* limping. 55 *with by*. 55-6 *wit enough . . . warm* A common proverbial expression. 56 *let him . . . difference* let him keep that fact as a mark in his coat of arms. A "difference" is a slight variation in such a coat, usually indicating that one belongs to a younger branch of the family [κ]. 57-8 *for it . . . creature* for that modicum of intelligence is all that he has in the way of wits to show that he is a reasonable creature and not a mere dumb animal. The horse often serves as an example of stupidity [κ]. 59 *sworn brother* In medieval times friends would often take a solemn oath to stand by each other in life and death as faithfully as if they were brothers indeed [κ]. 62 *block* hat block — indicating style or fashion.

- MESS. I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.
- BEAT. No. An he were, I would burn my study. But I pray you, who is his companion? Is there no young squarer now 65 that will make a voyage with him to the devil?
- MESS. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.
- BEAT. O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease! He is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio! If he have 70 caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a' be cured.
- MESS. I will hold friends with you, lady.
- BEAT. Do, good friend.
- LEON. You will never run mad, niece. 75
- BEAT. No, not till a hot January.
- MESS. Don Pedro is approach'd.

*Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick,
Balthasar, and John the Bastard.*

- PEDRO. Good Signior Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble? The fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it. 80
- LEON. Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your Grace; for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.
- PEDRO. You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is 85 your daughter.
- LEON. Her mother hath many times told me so.

63 *books* good graces. Beatrice takes the words literally in her reply. 65 *squarer* quarrelsome fellow — always “squaring off” for a fight [κ]. 70 *presently* instantly. 73 *hold friends* The speaker indicates that he wishes to keep on friendly terms with a lady who has such a sharp tongue [κ]. 75 *You will . . . mad* because you will never accept Benedick as a friend. 78–9 *your trouble* It was the old fashion for a guest to dwell upon the trouble he gave his host [κ]. 79 *cost* expense. 85 *charge* burden. 90 *have it full* have had a good answer (which has put you in

- BENE. Were you in doubt, sir, that you ask'd her?
- LEON. Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.
- PEDRO. You have it full, Benedick. We may guess by this what 90
you are, being a man. Truly the lady fathers herself. Be
happy, lady; for you are like an honourable father.
- BENE. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his
head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she 95
is.
- BEAT. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick.
Nobody marks you.
- BENE. What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?
- BEAT. Is it possible Disdain should die while she hath such meet
food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy itself must 100
convert to disdain if you come in her presence.
- BENE. Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved
of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find
in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for truly I love 105
none.
- BEAT. A dear happiness to women! They would else have been
troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank God and my
cold blood, I am of your humour for that. I had rather
hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves 110
me.
- BENE. God keep your ladyship still in that mind! So some
gentleman or other shall scape a predestinate scratch'd
face.
- BEAT. Scratching could not make it worse an 'twere such a face
as yours were. 115
- BENE. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

your place). 91 *fathers herself* proves by her likeness to her father that she is his child [K]. 92 *are like* resemble in looks. 93-4 *his head* his head with its white hair and beard. Benedick finds it amusing to think of Hero as closely resembling her old father [K]. 96 *still* always. 97 *marks* pays attention to. 99 *meet* appropriate. 101 *convert* change. 106 *dear happiness* great good fortune. 112 *predestinate* predestined. 116 *parrot-teacher* one who teaches a parrot to speak by monotonously repeating meaningless words.

- BEAT. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.
- BENE. I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way, a God's name! I have done. 120
- BEAT. You always end with a jade's trick. I know you of old.
- PEDRO. That is the sum of all, Leonato. Signior Claudio and Signior Benedick, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month, and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer. 125
I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.
- LEON. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn. [*To Don John*] Let me bid you welcome, my lord. Being reconciled to the Prince your brother, I owe you all duty. 130
- JOHN. I thank you. I am not of many words, but I thank you.
- LEON. Please it your Grace lead on?
- PEDRO. Your hand, Leonato. We will go together.

Exeunt. Manent Benedick and Claudio.

- CLAUD. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato? 135
- BENE. I noted her not, but I look'd on her.
- CLAUD. Is she not a modest young lady?
- BENE. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment? or would you have me speak after

117 *A bird . . . of yours* a bird that speaks my language is better than a beast that has learned yours; for the language that you teach him is no language at all; he is a dumb beast [κ]. 118–19 *so good a continuer* as good a “stayer”; as tireless in his pace as your tongue is in talking [κ]. 119 *keep your way* keep going. 121 *with a jade's trick* with some stupid remark that is as sensible as the tricks of a wretched nag [κ]; by stopping suddenly, as such an inferior horse (jade) might do. 122 *That . . . all* that sums it all up. This is the concluding remark of a conversation that has been going on between Leonato and Don Pedro (“aside”) while Benedick and Beatrice have been exchanging satirical jests [κ]. 133 *We will go together* Thus Don Pedro refuses to take precedence of Leonato [κ]. 136 *noted her not* Benedick perceives that Claudio has been attracted by Hero (who has spoken only once in this scene), and he proceeds to have some fun with

my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex? 140

CLAUD. No. I pray thee speak in sober judgment.

BENE. Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise,
too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great
praise. Only this commendation I can afford her, that
were she other than she is, she were unhandsome, and 145
being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

CLAUD. Thou thinkest I am in sport. I pray thee tell me truly
how thou lik'st her.

BENE. Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

CLAUD. Can the world buy such a jewel? 150

BENE. Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a
sad brow? or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us
Cupid is a good hare-finder and Vulcan a rare carpenter?
Come, in what key shall a man take you to go in the
song? 155

CLAUD. In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I look'd on.

BENE. I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter.
There's her cousin, an she were not possess'd with a fury,
exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth
the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to 160
turn husband, have you?

CLAUD. I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the con-
trary, if Hero would be my wife.

BENE. Is't come to this? In faith, hath not the world one man
but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see 165

him [κ]. 142 *low* small of stature. 143 *brown* of dark complexion. Only blondes were considered beautiful by Elizabethans. 151 *a case* clothing. 152 *sad brow* serious countenance. *flouting Jack* satirical, mocking fellow. 153 *Cupid is . . . carpenter* Only one given to satirical mockery would call blind Cupid keen-sighted enough a hunter to spot hares, or Vulcan, the blacksmith of the Gods, a mere carpenter. 154-5 *to go in the song* in order to be in harmony with your mood [κ]. 158 *possess'd with a fury* as sharp-tongued as if one of the Furies had taken possession of her [κ]. 165 *but he will . . . suspicion* who will not run the risk of getting married and thus being forced always to suspect that his wife has been false to him. The eternal jest of the cuckold's horns is in Benedick's mind. A husband, he insinuates, never knows whether horns have not grown on his head since he put on his cap [κ].

a bachelor of threescore again? Go to, i' faith! An thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away Sundays.

Enter Don Pedro.

Look! Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

PEDRO. What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to 170
Leonato's?

BENE. I would your Grace would constrain me to tell.

PEDRO. I charge thee on thy allegiance.

BENE. You hear, Count Claudio. I can be secret as a dumb man,
I would have you think so; but, on my allegiance — mark 175
you this — on my allegiance! he is in love. With who?
Now that is your Grace's part. Mark how short his answer is: With Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

CLAUD. If this were so, so were it utt' red.

BENE. Like the old tale, my lord: "It is not so, nor 'twas not so; 180
but indeed, God forbid it should be so!"

CLAUD. If my passion change not shortly, God forbid it should
be otherwise.

PEDRO. Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

CLAUD. You speak this to fetch me in, my lord. 185

PEDRO. By my troth, I speak my thought.

CLAUD. And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

BENE. And, by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

168 *sigh away Sundays* spend your Sundays (which should be days of rest and refreshment) in sorrow; spend all your leisure time in sadness [κ]. 177 *short* abrupt. 179 *If this . . . utt' red* if I were really in love with Hero and had confided in Benedick, this is precisely the satirical fashion in which he would reveal my secret. Claudio is not quite ready to admit that he is in love, but he confesses it in his next speech [κ]. 180 *Like the old tale* The tale is a version of the Bluebeard story. The heroine, who has visited the murderer's house, is relating her gruesome discoveries, pretending it was all a dream. The murderer, who is present, cries out, as she mentions one horror after another: "It is not so, nor it was not so, and God forbid it should be so!" [κ]. 185 *fetch me in* get me to confess. 188 *two faiths and troths* two — since I am speaking to both of you [κ]. 194 *heretic* Burning at the stake was the traditional punishment for religious heresy. *in the despite of* in showing scorn for. 196–7 *And never . . . will* and never could show any moderation in arguing for his heretical opinions, but always

CLAUD. That I love her, I feel.

PEDRO. That she is worthy, I know.

190

BENE. That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me. I will die in it at the stake.

PEDRO. Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

195

CLAUD. And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.

BENE. That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks; but that I will have a rechate winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is (for the which I may go the finer), I will live a bachelor.

200
205

PEDRO. I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

BENE. With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love. Prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking, pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen and hang me up at the door of a brothel house for the sign of blind Cupid.

210

PEDRO. Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

supported them with the full force of his obstinacy [κ]. 200-2 *but that I will . . . pardon me* but all women must excuse me from consenting to wear a horn on which every huntsman can blow, i.e. from being a confessed and notorious cuckold [κ]. *rechate* a signal on a huntsman's horn to call back the dogs [κ]. 201 *hang . . . baldrick* carry a bugle horn in an invisible belt; i.e. be a cuckold without knowing it [κ]. 204 *fine* conclusion. *go the finer* dress in finer apparel (since I shall not have to support a wife) [κ]. 208 *lose . . . with love* Sighing and sorrow were thought to exhaust the blood. Every sigh was said to draw a drop of blood from the heart [κ]. 211 *sign . . . Cupid* This appears to have been the conventional sign at Elizabethan brothels 212 *this faith* this heretical doctrine that thou hast just set forth so elaborately [κ]. 213 *a notable argument* a noteworthy subject of conversation; an instance that will often be cited as remarkable [κ].

- BENE. If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat and shoot at me; and he that hits me, let him be clapp'd on the shoulder 215 and call'd Adam.
- PEDRO. Well, as time shall try.
"In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke."
- BENE. The savage bull may; but if ever the sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my 220 forehead, and let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write "Here is good horse to hire," let them signify under my sign "Here you may see Benedick the married man."
- CLAUD. If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad. 225
- PEDRO. Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.
- BENE. I look for an earthquake too then.
- PEDRO. Well, you will temporize with the hours. In the meantime, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's, com- 230 mend me to him and tell him I will not fail him at supper; for indeed he hath made great preparation.
- BENE. I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassy; and so I commit you —
- CLAUD. To the tuition of God. From my house — if I had it — 235
- PEDRO. The sixth of July. Your loving friend, Benedick.
- BENE. Nay, mock not, mock not. The body of your discourse is sometime guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither. Ere you flout old ends any

214 *in a bottle like a cat* To shoot at a cat hung up in a basket or a wooden jar was a rustic diversion [κ]. 216 *Adam* Adam Bell, a famous archer. 217 *try* determine. 218 *In time . . . yoke* A proverbial expression. 225 *horn-mad* (a) mad like an enraged bull (b) a cuckold, mad with jealousy. 226 *spent all his quiver* used up all his arrows. *Venice* In Shakespeare's time Venice was famous for its courtesans [κ]. 229 *temporize with the hours* adapt yourself to the hours; as time goes on, you will have to adapt your sentiments and conduct to the changes that time brings with it [κ]. 233 *matter* wit, intellect. 235 *tuition* protection. Claudio mockingly imitates the formal close of a letter. 238 *guarded* (a) ornamented (b) protected. *guards* trimmings. 239 *basted* stitched. *old ends* old scraps or tags (odds and ends) of proverbial wisdom [κ]. 240 *examine* your

further, examine your conscience. And so I leave you. 240

Exit.

CLAUD. My liege, your Highness now may do me good.

PEDRO. My love is thine to teach. Teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

CLAUD. Hath Leonato any son, my lord? 245

PEDRO. No child but Hero; she's his only heir.
Dost thou affect her, Claudio?

CLAUD. O my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That lik'd, but had a rougher task in hand 250
Than to drive liking to the name of love;
But now I am return'd and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is, 255
Saying I lik'd her ere I went to wars.

PEDRO. Thou wilt be like a lover presently
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it,
And I will break with her and with her father, 260
And thou shalt have her. Was't not to this end
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story?

CLAUD. How sweetly you do minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion!

conscience make sure that your sarcastic remarks do not apply to yourself. 243 *apt* ready. 247 *affect* love. 248 *ended action* recently completed military campaign. 252 *that* now that. 259 *it* your love for her. 260 *break with* broach the subject to. 262 *to twist* to knit up, compose. Don Pedro smiles at the elaboration of Claudio's speech [κ]. Claudio has been speaking in the conventional manner of a lover. His inquiry as to Hero's wealth and his asking his friend to intercede for him represent the normal Elizabethan manner of beginning marriage negotiations. 263 *minister to* help, do service to. Claudio is thanking Don Pedro for his offer to speak to Hero and her father in his behalf [κ]. 264 *complexion* appearance.

But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salv'd it with a longer treatise.

PEDRO. What need the bridge much broader than the flood?
The fairest grant is the necessity.
Look, what will serve is fit. 'Tis once, thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedy. 270
I know we shall have revelling to-night.
I will assume thy part in some disguise
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart
And take her hearing prisoner with the force 275
And strong encounter of my amorous tale.
Then after to her father will I break,
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practice let us put it presently. *Exeunt.*

Exeunt.



[SCENE II. *A room in Leonato's house.*]

Enter [at one door] Leonato and [at another door, Antonio,] an old man, brother to Leonato.

LEON. How now, brother? Where is my cousin your son? Hath he provided this music?

ANT. He is very busy about it. But, brother, I can tell you strange news that you yet dreamt not of.

LEON. Are they good? 5

ANT. As the event stamps them; but they have a good cover,

265-6 *lest . . . treatise* for fear you might think my love too sullen, I was disposed to use even more words in order to make a smooth story of it—to make it seem less abrupt in the telling. Claudio is explaining why he has “twisted so fine a story” [k]. 268 *The fairest . . . necessity* the best favour one can receive is to have what one needs [k]. 269 *what will serve* is fit anything that will answer the purpose is suitable [k]. 271 *revelling* festivity. The word did not carry, as in modern use, the sense of excess or riot [k]. 274 *in her . . . heart* to her in private I’ll disclose my love (i.e. your love, for I shall be playing your part) [k]. 275-6 *And take . . . tale* The lady is conceived of, in conventional terms, as an adversary to be overcome by the beseeging lover, his weapons being his loving words. The military metaphor is appropriate for Don Pedro. 277 *break* broach the subject. 279 *presently* at once.

I.11. 1 *cousin* kinsman. The term was used for any relative outside the im-

- JOHN. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds; therefore the sadness is without limit.
- CON. You should hear reason. 5
- JOHN. And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it?
- CON. If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.
- JOHN. I wonder that thou (being, as thou say'st thou art, born under Saturn) goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am: I must 10
be sad when I have cause, and smile at no man's jests; eat when I have stomach, and wait for no man's leisure; sleep when I am drowsy, and tend on no man's business; laugh when I am merry, and claw no man in his humour.
- CON. Yea, but you must not make the full show of this till you 15
may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace where it is impossible you should take true root but by the fair weather that you make yourself. It is needful that you frame the season for your own 20
harvest.
- JOHN. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdain'd of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any. In this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, 25
it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain.
I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchis'd with a clog;

3 *breeds* causes (my sadness). 7 *present remedy* immediate cure. a *patient sufferance* the ability to endure (your sadness) with patience 8-9 *born under Saturn* born when Saturn was the ruling planet, and therefore of a Saturnian (or Saturnine) disposition — prone to every kind of dismal wickedness [κ]. 9-10 *goest about . . . mischief* dost try to cure the deadly morbidity of my disposition by mere moralizing. "Mischief" is common in the sense of "disease" [κ]. 12 *stomach* appetite. 14 *claw . . . humour* adapt myself to no man's likes and dislikes. To "claw" means, literally, to "scratch," and hence it came to signify to "please" or "flatter" — as scratching is a relief when one itches [κ]. 16 *without controlment* without being called to account for it. To "control" often means to "rebuke" or "restrain" [κ]. 16-17 *stood out* rebelled. 18 *grace* favour. Thus we learn that Don John has been forgiven by his brother and that he feels the resentment which too often is cherished by a pardoned offender [κ]. 20-1 *frame . . . harvest* create the occasion for your own advantage. 22-3 *I had rather . . . grace* I had rather be an independent outcast than a prince's favourite courtier.

therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking. In the meantime let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me. 30

CON. Can you make no use of your discontent?

JOHN. I make all use of it, for I use it only.

Enter Borachio.

Who comes here? What news, Borachio?

BORA. I came yonder from a great supper. The Prince your brother is royally entertain'd by Leonato, and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage. 35

JOHN. Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool that betroths himself to unquietness?

BORA. Marry, it is your brother's right hand. 40

JOHN. Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

BORA. Even he.

JOHN. A proper squire! And who? and who? which way looks he?

BORA. Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato. 45

JOHN. A very forward March-chick! How came you to this?

BORA. Being entertain'd for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the Prince and Claudio, hand in hand in sad conference. I whipt me behind the arras and

A "canker" (also called "dog rose") is a wild rose [κ]. It was despised as a weed. 23 *blood* disposition. 24 *to fashion* . . . any to assume such a manner as shall by its hypocrisy win the undeserved affection of anybody [κ]. 28 *decreed* decided. 30 *that I am* what I am in fact. 32 *use* profitable employment [κ]. 33 *I use it only* I practise it exclusively. Don John puns bitterly on Conrade's word "use" [κ]. 37 *intelligence* of information about. 38 *model* ground plan. 39 *is he for a fool* kind of fool is he. 40 *brother's* F¹; Q: "bothers." 43 *proper* handsome. 45 *on Hero* F¹; Q: "one Hero." 46 *forward March-chick* precocious youngster. 47 *entertain'd* for engaged as. *smoking* fumigrating (by burning aromatic substances). Such was the practice in Shakespeare's time, for the art of ventilation was unknown and anything like sanitation was a thing of the future [κ]. 48 *comes me* "Me" is the so-called "ethical dative," which adds nothing to the sense but gives a colloquial touch to the style [κ]. 49 *sad* serious.

there heard it agreed upon that the Prince should woo 50
 Hero for himself, and having obtain'd her, give her to
 Count Claudio.

JOHN. Come, come, let us thither. This may prove food to my
 displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of
 my overthrow. If I can cross him any way, I bless myself 55
 every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?

CON. To the death, my lord.

JOHN. Let us to the great supper. Their cheer is the greater
 that I am subdued. Would the cook were o' my mind!
 Shall we go prove what's to be done? 60

BORA. We'll wait upon your lordship. *Exeunt.*

54 *displeasure* misanthropy. *start-up* upstart. 55 *overthrow* defeat (in my rebellion against Don Pedro). *cross* thwart. 56 *sure* trustworthy. 58 *cheer* festivity—especially in the way of good things to eat [κ]. 60 *prove . . . done* try to find out what we can do in the way of thwarting Claudio's plans [κ]. 61 *wait upon* accompany you as attendants [κ].

Act Two

[SCENE I. *A hall in Leonato's house.*]

Enter Leonato, [Antonio] his Brother, Hero his Daughter, and Beatrice his Niece, and a Kinsman; [also Margaret and Ursula].

LEON. Was not Count John here at supper?

ANT. I saw him not.

BEAT. How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him but I am heart-burn'd an hour after.

HERO. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

5

BEAT. He were an excellent man that were made just in the midway between him and Benedick. The one is too like an image and says nothing, and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

LEON. Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face —

10

BEAT. With a good leg and a good foot, uncle, and money

II.I. 3 *tartly* sour. Adverbs are often used with "look" and similar verbs where the modern idiom requires an adjective [κ]. 4 *heart-burn'd* Heartburn (with which the heart has nothing to do) is an old name for a certain symptom of indigestion. It is caused by acid from the stomach [κ]; here it is the acid in Don John's face which causes the condition in Beatrice. 6 *were* would be. 8 *image* statue. 8-9 *my lady's eldest son* a spoilt child. There is no reference to any particular person; "my lady" is used in a general sense [κ].

enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world — if 'a could get her good will.

15

LEON. By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband if thou be so shrewd of thy tongue.

ANT. In faith, she's too curst.

BEAT. Too curst is more than curst. I shall lessen God's sending that way, for it is said, "God sends a curst cow short horns," but to a cow too curst he sends none.

20

LEON. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns.

BEAT. Just, if he sends me no husband; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face. I had rather lie in the woollen!

25

LEON. You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

BEAT. What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man; and he that is more than a youth is not for me; and he that is less than a man, I am not for him. Therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-ward and lead his apes into hell.

30

LEON. Well then, go you into hell?

35

BEAT. No; but to the gate, and there will the devil meet me like an old cuckold with horns on his head, and say "Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven. Here's no place for you maids." So deliver I up my apes, and away

17 *shrewd* shrewish, satirical. 18 *curst* A synonym for "shrewd." 20 *that way* in that respect. 20-1 *God sends . . . short horns* An old proverb, often used to illustrate God's providential care of men [κ]. An ill-tempered cow is given less power to hurt her master. 23 *no husband* Horns, of course, suggest the inevitable joke of the horns of the cuckold. 26 *in the woollen* in rough woollen blankets without sheets [κ]. 27 *light on* discover. 33 *in earnest* as a payment in advance to bind the bargain by which I become the bearkeeper's assistant [κ]. 34 *bear-ward* bearkeeper (DYCE; Q, κ: "berrord," a common variant form). *lead . . . hell* To lead apes in hell was the proverbial fate of women who died unmarried. Bearkeepers often trained performing apes as well as bears. 37 *like*

to Saint Peter — for the heavens. He shows me where the 40
bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is
long.

ANT. [to Hero] Well, niece, I trust you will be rul'd by your
father.

BEAT. Yes faith. It is my cousin's duty to make curtsy and say, 45
"Father, as it please you." But yet for all that, cousin,
let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another
curtsy, and say, "Father, as it please me."

LEON. Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a 50
husband.

BEAT. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth.
Would it not grieve a woman to be overmaster'd with
a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to
a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none. Adam's
sons are my brethren, and truly I hold it a sin to match 55
in my kindred.

LEON. Daughter, remember what I told you. If the Prince do
solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

BEAT. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not 60
wooded in good time. If the Prince be too important, tell
him there is measure in everything, and so dance out
the answer. For, hear me, Hero: wooing, wedding, and
repenting is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace:
the first suit is hot and hasty like a Scotch jig — and full
as fantastical; the wedding, mannerly modest, as a meas- 65

in the guise of. Being horned, the devil must inevitably be a cuckold. 40
for the heavens bound for heaven. 41-2 *as merry . . . long* Beatrice remembers
the text: "For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are
given in marriage, but are as the angels which are in heaven" (MARK, XII, 25)
[κ]. 51 *metal* material. 54 *marl* clay. 55-6 *match in my kindred* marry a
relative. 58 *in that kind* in that regard — with reference to marriage. 60 *in*
good time with due regard to decorum; with such humility as befits a suitor.
The pun is obvious [κ]. *important* importunate (as opposed to "in good time").
63 *a measure* a stately dance, like a minuet [κ]. *a cinque-pace* a rapid and lively
kind of dance [κ]; the first five steps of the galliard.

ure, full of state and ancientry; and then comes Repentance and with his bad legs falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

LEON. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

BEAT. I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight. 70

LEON. The revellers are ent'ring, brother. Make good room.

[Exit Antonio.]

Enter, [masked,] Don Pedro, Claudio, Benedick, and Balthasar. [With them enter Antonio, also masked. After them enter] Don John [and Borachio (without masks), who stand aside and look on during the dance].

PEDRO. Lady, will you walk a bout with your friend?

HERO. So you walk softly and look sweetly and say nothing, I am yours for the walk; and especially when I walk away. 75

PEDRO. With me in your company?

HERO. I may say so when I please.

PEDRO. And when please you to say so?

HERO. When I like your favour, for God defend the lute should be like the case! 80

PEDRO. My visor is Philemon's roof; within the house is Jove.

HERO. Why then, your visor should be thatch'd.

66 *state* formal dignity. *ancientry* old-fashioned courtliness (CAPELL; Q. F¹: "aunchentry"). 66-7 *Repentance . . . legs* It has been suggested that Shakespeare may be alluding to some specific representation of "Repentance," either in a morality play or in some picture. 69 *apprehend passing shrewdly* perceive things very sharply and bitterly. 72 *walk a bout* have a turn in a dance (K; Q: "walke about"). 73 *So* provided that. 79 *favour* features, looks. *defend* forbid. 79-80 *the lute . . . case* i.e. that your face should be like your mask. 81 *visor* mask. *Philemon's roof* Ovid in METAMORPHOSES, VIII, tells the story of Baucis and Philemon, who entertained Jove in disguise when he visited their humble cottage. *Jove* Thus Pedro suggests his identity [K]. 82 *should be thatch'd* (a) should have matted hair (b) should have a thatched roof like the

- PEDRO. Speak low if you speak love. [Takes her aside.]
- BALTH. Well, I would you did like me.
- MARG. So would not I for your own sake, for I have many ill 85
qualities.
- BALTH. Which is one?
- MARG. I say my prayers aloud.
- BALTH. I love you the better. The hearers may cry Amen.
- MARG. God match me with a good dancer! 90
- BALTH. Amen.
- MARG. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is
done! Answer, clerk.
- BALTH. No more words. The clerk is answered.
[Takes her aside.]
- URS. I know you well enough. You are Signior Antonio. 95
- ANT. At a word, I am not.
- URS. I know you by the waggling of your head.
- ANT. To tell you true, I counterfeit him.
- URS. You could never do him so ill-well unless you were the
very man. Here's his dry hand up and down. You are 100
he, you are he!
- ANT. At a word, I am not.
- URS. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your
excellent wit? Can virtue hide itself? Go to, mum, you

cottage of Philemon. 84, 87, 89 *Balth* THEOBALD; Q: "Bene." Some editors would give these lines, as well as lines 91 and 94, to Borachio, as a more appropriate dancing partner for Margaret. 86 *qualities* traits of character. 93 *Answer, clerk* It was the parish clerk's office to make the responses in the church service. Balthasar, Margaret implies, has been playing a clerk's part in saying "Amen" [K]. 94 *The clerk is answered* if I am the clerk, I am answered instead of answering. Therefore I have nothing more to say [K]. 96 *At a word* briefly. 99 *do him so ill-well* imitate him so well in his feebleness. [K]. 100 *dry hand* A traditional symptom of old age or debility [K]. *up and down* exactly. 104 *virtue* excellence or accomplishment of any kind.

are he. Graces will appear, and there's an end.

105

[*They step aside.*]

BEAT. Will you not tell me who told you so?

BENE. No, you shall pardon me.

BEAT. Nor will you not tell me who you are?

BENE. Not now.

BEAT. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out 110
of the "Hundred Merry Tales." Well, this was Signior
Benedick that said so.

BENE. What's he?

BEAT. I am sure you know him well enough.

BENE. Not I, believe me.

115

BEAT. Did he never make you laugh?

BENE. I pray you, what is he?

BEAT. Why, he is the Prince's jester, a very dull fool. Only his
gift is in devising impossible slanders. None but liber-
tines delight in him; and the commendation is not in his 120
wit, but in his villainy; for he both pleases men and
angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him.
I am sure he is in the fleet. I would he had boarded me.

BENE. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

BEAT. Do, do. He'll but break a comparison or two on me; 125
which peradventure, not marked or not laugh'd at,
strikes him into melancholy; and then there's a partridge
wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night.

[*Music.*]

105 *Graces* good qualities. 111 *Hundred Merry Tales* A coarsely humorous book, very popular in Shakespeare's day [κ]. 119-20 *libertines* free livers, loose livers. Not so specialized in meaning as in modern English [κ]. 120 *the commendation* that which recommends him to them; that for which they like him [κ]. 121 *villainy* malicious satire [κ]. 123 *in the fleet* in the company of maskers (compared to ships sailing about the room). Some have suspected an allusion to the Fleet prison in London. *boarded* accosted, spoken to, Beatrice carries on the nautical metaphor. 125 *break . . . or two* Beatrice adapts the phrase "to break a lance" (in a tournament) [κ]. Benedick is a tilter with words. 126 *peradventure*

We must follow the leaders.

BENE. In every good thing. 130

BEAT. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning.

Dance. Exeunt [all but Don John, Borachio, and Claudio].

JOHN. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it. The ladies follow her and but one visor remains. 135

BORA. And that is Claudio. I know him by his bearing.

JOHN. Are you not Signior Benedick?

CLAUD. You know me well. I am he.

JOHN. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love. He is enamour'd on Hero. I pray you dissuade him from her; 140 she is no equal for his birth. You may do the part of an honest man in it.

CLAUD. How know you he loves her?

JOHN. I heard him swear his affection.

BORA. So did I too, and he swore he would marry her to-night. 145

JOHN. Come, let us to the banquet. *Exeunt. Manet Claudio.*

CLAUD. Thus answer I in name of Benedick
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.

[*Unmasks.*]

'Tis certain so. The Prince wooes for himself.

perhaps. 129 *follow the leaders* in the dance. 132 *turning* (a) turn of the road (b) movement in the dance. 133 *Sure my . . . Hero* Don John had supposed that his brother meant to woo Hero for Claudio (I.III.50-2), but Don Pedro has been acting the part of a lover so well that Don John is persuaded that he had actually fallen in love with her. We are not to suppose that Claudio heard this remark [κ]. 135 *visor* masquer. 139 *very near . . . love* a very intimate friend of my brother's [κ]. 142 *honest* honourable. 145 *to-night* This modifies "swore." Marriages were celebrated in the morning [κ]. 146 *banquet* a light meal of wine and sweetmeats, served after supper.

Friendship is constant in all other things 150
 Save in the office and affairs of love.
 Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues;
 Let every eye negotiate for itself
 And trust no agent; for beauty is a witch
 Against whose charms faith melteth into blood. 155
 This is an accident of hourly proof.
 Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore Hero!

Enter Benedick [unmasked].

BENE. Count Claudio?

CLAUD. Yea, the same.

BENE. Come, will you go with me? 160

CLAUD. Whither?

BENE. Even to the next willow, about your own business,
 County. What fashion will you wear the garland of?
 about your neck, like an usurer's chain? or under your
 arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? You must wear it one way, 165
 for the Prince hath got your Hero.

CLAUD. I wish him joy of her.

BENE. Why, that's spoken like an honest drovier. So they sell
 bullocks. But did you think the Prince would have
 served you thus? 170

151 *office* business. We are prepared for Claudio's later treatment of Hero by his readiness to believe ill of his friend. 152 *use* should use. 154 *agent* go-between. 155 *Against whose charms* when exposed to whose spells. *melteth* The allusion is to image magic, which has been prevalent from very ancient times. An effigy of wax, clay, wood, metal, or almost any substance, is pierced with nails, pins, or thorns, and burned or slowly roasted. The victim is expected to suffer corresponding torments, to pine away as the puppet melts or crumbles, and to die when it is stabbed to the heart [K]. *blood* passion. 156 *accident* . . . *proof* occurrence of which every hour affords an example [K]. 157 *mistrusted* suspected. 162 *willow* The weeping willow was a symbol for grief and especially for the grief of disconsolate lovers. A willow garland was the wreath that such a lover was said to wear [K]. 163 *County* count. 164 *usurer's chain* A long gold chain was a regular adornment in a rich man's attire [K]. 168 *drovier* drover, cattle-dealer. 168-9 *So they sell bullocks* He means that, when the drover sells an animal, he wishes the purchaser good luck [K]. 172-3 *blind man* . . . *meat* In the Spanish picaresque romance LAZARILLO DE TORMES, the hero leads about

CLAUD. I pray you leave me.

BENE. Ho! now you strike like the blind man! 'Twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post.

CLAUD. If it will not be, I'll leave you. *Exit.*

BENE. Alas, poor hurt fowl! now will he creep into sedges. But, 175
that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know
me! The Prince's fool! Ha! it may be I go under that
title because I am merry. Yea, but so I am apt to do
myself wrong. I am not so reputed. It is the base (though
bitter) disposition of Beatrice that puts the world into 180
her person and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as
I may.

Enter Don Pedro.

PEDRO. Now, signior, where's the Count? Did you see him?

BENE. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame.
I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren. 185
I told him, and I think I told him true, that your Grace
had got the good will of this young lady, and I off'ed
him my company to a willow tree, either to make him
a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod,
as being worthy to be whipt. 190

PEDRO. To be whipt? What's his fault?

BENE. The flat transgression of a schoolboy who, being over-

his blind master and steals his food. It may be to this well-known episode that Benedick alludes. It was published in London in 1586 in a translation by David Rowlands. 173 *post* (a) messenger (b) pillar. In the Spanish tale the blind man is caused by the thieving boy to jump against a stone pillar. 174 *it will not be* you will not stop. 175 *sedges* reeds. 178 *merry* a joker. 178-9 *so I am . . . so reputed* in that conclusion (in thinking I am known as the Prince's fool) I am too ready to do myself an injustice, for I am sure I have no such reputation [κ]. 179-81 *It is the base . . . gives me out* it is Beatrice's contemptible disposition that (ascribing to the whole world her own personal feelings with regard to me) thus describes me; but, though I may regard her disposition as contemptible, I find that I am stung by it—I cannot bear her slander without cringing [κ]. 184 *Lady Fame* the goddess of report and rumour [κ]. 185 *lodge in a warren* house in a rabbit warren. The rabbit was a traditional symbol of melancholy. 192 *The flat . . . schoolboy* nothing more or less than the error of a stupid schoolboy [κ].

joyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

PEDRO. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer. 195

BENE. Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself, and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who, as I take it, have stol'n his bird's nest. 200

PEDRO. I will but teach them to sing and restore them to the owner.

BENE. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith you say honestly.

PEDRO. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you. The gentleman that danc'd with her told her she is much wrong'd by you. 205

BENE. O, she misus'd me past the endurance of a block! An oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the Prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs. If her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her; she 210 215

201 *them* the young birds in the nest. 203-4 *If their singing . . . honestly* if they sing as you say they will, then what you tell me is true; i.e. if I find that you really teach Hero to love Claudio, then I shall know you are telling me the truth [k]. *answer* agree with. 206 *wrong'd* slandered. 208 *misus'd* abused (in her talk) [k]. 212-13 *a great thaw* At such a time, in Shakespeare's day, the roads were almost or quite impassable, and all visiting and gaiety were at a standstill; one could only stay at home moping [k]. 213-14 *impossible conveyance* superhuman dexterity [k]. 214 *at a mark* set up as a target. 217 *terminations* terms, epithets, name-callings. 218 *infect* emit foul, infectious odours. 221 *Hercules* Hercules, when enslaved to Omphale, wore her clothes while she attired herself in his lion-skin robe and carried his club; he was also forced to spin (Ovid, *FASTI*, II, 317ff; *HEROIDES*, IX, 55ff). Beatrice, says Benedick, would

would infect to the North Star. I would not marry her though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgress'd. She would have made Hercules have turn'd spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her. You shall find her the infernal Ate in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would conjure her, for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither; so indeed all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follows her. 220 225

Enter Claudio and Beatrice, Leonato, Hero.

PEDRO. Look, here she comes.

BENE. Will your Grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the furthest inch of Asia; bring you the length of Prester John's foot; fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard; do you any embassy to the Pygmies — rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy. You have no employment for me? 230 235

PEDRO. None, but to desire your good company.

BENE. O God, sir, here's a dish I love not! I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. 240
Exit.

have humiliated him even more than that [κ]. 223 *the infernal Ate* the goddess of discord. 224 *conjure her* send her home to hell by his exorcisms [κ]. 224-7 *while she is here . . . go thither* While Beatrice is on earth (rather than in hell where she belongs), hell resembles a quiet sanctuary, so attractive that men will sin in order to go there. 228 *follows her* attends her wherever she goes [κ]. 232 *the Antipodes* people believed to live on the underside of the earth, where the sun went when it set. 233 *toothpicker* toothpick. 234 *Prester John* a fabulous monarch of the Far East, who united the offices of king and Christian priest. "Prester" is a condensed form of "Presbyter" [κ]. 235 *the great Cham* the great Khan of Tartary, ruler of the Mongols [κ]. 236 *the Pygmies* small people believed to live in the mountains of India. 237 *harpy* the foul and predatory half-bird-half-woman of Greek mythology.

- PEDRO. Come, lady, come; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.
- BEAT. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile, and I gave him use for it — a double heart for his single one. Marry, 245
once before he won it of me with false dice; therefore your Grace may well say I have lost it.
- PEDRO. You have put him down, lady; you have put him down.
- BEAT. So I would not he should do me, my lord, lest I should prove the mother of fools. I have brought Count 250
Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.
- PEDRO. Why, how now, Count? Wherefore are you sad?
- CLAUD. Not sad, my lord.
- PEDRO. How then? sick?
- CLAUD. Neither, my lord. 255
- BEAT. The Count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well; but civil count — civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.
- PEDRO. I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, 260
I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won. I have broke with her father, and his good will obtained. Name the day of marriage, and God give thee joy!
- LEON. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes. His Grace hath made the match, and all grace 265
say Amen to it!
- BEAT. Speak, Count, 'tis your cue.

244 *lent it me awhile* This suggests that some kind of love relation had existed between Beatrice and Benedick in the past, but just what it consisted of is not made clear. 245 *use interest*. 248 *put him down* put him in his place. Beatrice puns on the expression. 257 *civil as an orange* Oranges from Seville in Spain were neither too sweet nor too sour — like Claudio, who is neither sad nor merry but grave and sober (civil). 258 *jealous complexion* Yellow, the colour of Seville oranges, is also the colour traditionally associated with jealousy. 259 *blazon* description (of Claudio). 260 *conceit is false* understanding of the situation is wrong. 275 *poor fool* poor innocent creature. "Fool" is common as a term of affection or compassion [κ]. 275-6 *on the windy side of care* to the windward of care (and

CLAUD. Silence is the perfectest herald of joy. I were but little happy if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours. I give away myself for you and dote upon 270 the exchange.

BEAT. Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss and let not him speak neither.

PEDRO. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

BEAT. Yea, my lord; I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the 275 windy side of care. My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

CLAUD. And so she doth, cousin.

BEAT. Good Lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburnt. I may sit in a corner 280 and cry "Heigh-ho for a husband!"

PEDRO. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

BEAT. I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your Grace ne'er a brother like you? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them. 285

PEDRO. Will you have me, lady?

BEAT. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working days: your Grace is too costly to wear every day. But I beseech your Grace pardon me. I was born to speak all mirth and no matter. 290

PEDRO. Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you, for out o' question you were born in a merry hour.

BEAT. No, sure, my lord, my mother cried; but then there was

so not exposed to its blasts) [K]. 279 *for alliance* how alliances are being made! Claudio has just called her "cousin." 279-80 *to the world* to be married. To "go to the world" is, literally, to abandon the condition of celibacy and take up a "wordly life" [K]. 280 *sunburnt* tanned by the sun, dark-complexioned (and thus not likely to be married, since dark women were not considered beautiful by Elizabethans). 281 *cry "Heigh-ho for long and sigh in vain for.* 282 *get procure.* Beatrice puns on the word in the sense of "conceive." 284 *got* begot, conceived. 285 *come by* manage to get. 290 *no matter* nothing serious or sensible. 291 *offends* displeases. Much milder in sense than in modern usage [K].

a star danc'd, and under that was I born. Cousins, God 295
give you joy!

LEON. Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

BEAT. I cry you mercy, uncle. By your Grace's pardon. *Exit.*

PEDRO. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady.

LEON. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my 300
lord. She is never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever
sad then; for I have heard my daughter say she hath
often dreamt of unhappiness and wak'd herself with
laughing.

PEDRO. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband. 305

LEON. O, by no means! She mocks all her wooers out of suit.

PEDRO. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

LEON. O Lord, my lord! if they were but a week married, they
would talk themselves mad.

PEDRO. County Claudio, when mean you to go to church? 310

CLAUD. To-morrow, my lord. Time goes on crutches till love
have all his rites.

LEON. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just
sevensnight; and a time too brief too, to have all things
answer my mind. 315

PEDRO. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing; but
I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by
us. I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules'
labours, which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the
Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection th' one with 320
th' other. I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not

298 *cry you mercy* beg pardon for my neglect. 302 *sad* serious. 303 *unhappi-*
ness some amusing roguery or other, either in speech or action [K]. 306 *mocks*
all . . . of suit makes fun of them so that they do not dare to woo her [K].
307 *were* would be. 310 *County* count. 313 *son* Often used by prospective fath-
ers-in-law in old times [K]. 313-14 *a just sevensnight* exactly a week. 315 *answer*
my mind accord with what I should think fitting so important an occasion [K].
316 *breathing* pause, interval of time. 321 *fain* gladly. 322 *minister* furnish.

comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine.
How canst thou cross this marriage?

BORA. Not honestly, my lord, but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

JOHN. Show me briefly how. 10

BORA. I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting gentlewoman to Hero.

JOHN. I remember.

BORA. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint 15
her to look out at her lady's chamber window.

JOHN. What life is in that to be the death of this marriage?

BORA. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the Prince your brother; spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio 20
(whose estimation do you mightily hold up) to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

JOHN. What proof shall I make of that?

BORA. Proof enough to misuse the Prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other 25
issue?

JOHN. Only to despise them I will endeavour anything.

BORA. Go then; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone; tell them that you know that Hero loves me; intend a kind of zeal both to the Prince 30
and Claudio, as — in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, and his friend's reputation, who

6 *his affection* what he desires. *ranges evenly* accords exactly. 8 *honestly* by honourable means. *dishonesty* dishonour. 15-16 *appoint her* arrange with her. 18 *temper* mix, compound. 21 *estimation* reputation. *hold up* exalt. 22 *stale* whore. 24 *misuse* delude. 25 *undo* ruin. 26 *issue* result. 27 *Only to despise* merely to spite. 28 *meet* convenient. 30 *intend* pretend. 33 *like to be cozen'd* likely to be cheated. *semblance of a maid* mere appearance of a virgin. 35 *trial* testing (your story). *instances* proofs. 38 *term me Claudio* i.e. in mockery. For Hero to address Borachio as Claudio under the supposed circumstances would have been as much as to say, "You are my Claudio!"

BOY. I am here already, sir.

5

BENE. I know that, but I would have thee hence and here again. (*Exit Boy.*) I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laugh'd at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love; and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe. I have known when he would have walk'd ten mile afoot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turn'd orthography; his words are a very fantastical banquet — just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not. I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I for an angel; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha, the

10

15

20

25

30

8-9 *dedicates* . . . *love* devotes all his attention to behaving as a lover should [κ]. 10 *argument* subject. 14 *the tabor and the pipe* the music of social intercourse as opposed to martial music. A tabor is a small drum [κ]. 16 *carving* devising. 17 *doublet* jacket. 19 *orthography* a person who is very fussy and scrupulous about always using the right word and pronouncing it correctly [κ]. 21 *these eyes* the eyes of a lover. 26 *graces* fine qualities or accomplishments. 27-8 *in my grace* in favour with me. 29 *cheapen her* bargain for her. 30-1 *noble* . . . *an angel* she must be of noble birth or I won't take her, even if she is an angel. The pun is obvious. A "noble" was a coin worth one third of a pound sterling; an "angel" was a coin worth half a pound [κ]. 31 *discourse* conversational ability. 32 *her hair* . . . *God* i.e. if these other conditions are

Prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour.

[Hides.]

Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio.

Music [within].

PEDRO. Come, shall we hear this music?

CLAUD. Yea, my good lord. How still the evening is, 35
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony!

PEDRO. See you where Benedick hath hid himself?

CLAUD. O, very well, my lord. The music ended,
We'll fit the kid-fox with a pennyworth.

Enter Balthasar with Music.

PEDRO. Come, Balthasar, we'll hear that song again. 40

BALTH. O, good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander music any more than once.

PEDRO. It is the witness still of excellency
To put a strange face on his own perfection.
I pray thee sing, and let me woo no more. 45

BALTH. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing,
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit
To her he thinks not worthy, yet he woos,
Yet will he swear he loves.

PEDRO. Nay, pray thee come;
Or if thou wilt hold longer argument, 50
Do it in notes.

BALTH. Note this before my notes:

satisfied, I will not insist on having her hair of this or that colour [κ]. This is a more likely meaning than that he is insisting that she not dye her hair, a common practice among Elizabethan women. 36 *grace harmony* do honour to the music [κ]. 39 *We'll fit . . . pennyworth* we'll give the sly young fellow good payment for eavesdropping; he shall hear more than he bargained for [κ]. Some editors would follow Warburton in reading "hid-fox," supposing the allusion to be to some kind of children's game, but a "kid-fox" is a "young fox" and no emendation is really necessary. 41 *tax* task. 43 *witness* evidence. *still* ever. 44 *To put . . . perfection* to pretend not to recognize its own perfection [κ]. 45 *let . . . no more* do not make me coax you any longer [κ]. 50 *argument* discussion.

There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

PEDRO. Why, these are very crotchets that he speaks!

Note notes, forsooth, and nothing! [Music.]

BENE. [aside] Now divine air! Now is his soul ravish'd! Is it not 55
strange that sheep's guts should hale souls out of men's
bodies? Well, a horn for my money, when all's done.

[Balthasar sings.]

The Song.

Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more!

Men were deceivers ever,

One foot in sea, and one on shore; 60

To one thing constant never.

Then sigh not so,

But let them go,

And be you blithe and bonny,

Converting all your sounds of woe 65

Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe,

Of dumps so dull and heavy!

The fraud of men was ever so,

Since summer first was leavy. 70

Then sigh not so, &c.

PEDRO. By my troth, a good song.

BALTH. And an ill singer, my lord.

PEDRO. Ha, no, no, faith! Thou sing'st well enough for a shift.

BENE. [aside] An he had been a dog that should have howl'd 75

53 *crotchets* A pun, as usual: (a) "he actually talks in musical notes" (a crotchet being a quarter note) (b) "he uses punning tricks" — a whimsical turn of phrase [k]. 54 *Note . . . nothing* Thus Don Pedro repeats Balthasar's mock-modest remark and comments on it. "Upon my word, he actually talks of 'noting notes' and 'noting' — and all amounts to 'nothing'!" "Nothing" was almost or quite identical in pronunciation with "noting" [k]. Some have suspected this pun in the very name of the play. 55 *Now . . . ravish'd* Benedick, pretending to be insensible to the charms of music, mocks Don Pedro. 56 *hale* draw. 57 *a horn* a hunting horn — something more masculine than these stringed instruments [k]. 64 *bonny* cheerful. 67 *moe* more. Not a condensed form but an

thus, they would have hang'd him; and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief. I had as lief have heard the night raven, come what plague could have come after it.

PEDRO. Yea, marry. Dost thou hear, Balthasar? I pray thee get us some excellent music; for to-morrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber window. 80

BALTH. The best I can, my lord.

PEDRO. Do so. Farewell.

Exit Balthasar [with Musicians].

Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of to-day? that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick? 85

CLAUD. O, ay! — [*Aside to Pedro*] Stalk on, stalk on; the fowl sits. — I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

LEON. No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seem'd ever to abhor. 90

BENE. [*aside*] Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner?

LEON. By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it, but that she loves him with an enraged affection. It is past the infinite of thought. 95

PEDRO. May be she doth but counterfeit.

CLAUD. Faith, like enough.

LEON. O God, counterfeit? There was never counterfeit of pas-

independent formation from the same root [κ]. 68 *dumps* sorrowful moods. Not an undignified word in Shakespeare's time [κ]. 69 *ever* so always, just as it is now [κ]. 70 *leavy* leafy. 74 *a shift* an emergency. 77 *bode no mischief* be not a portent of misfortune — like the howling of a dog in the night [κ]. *lief* F¹; Q, K: "live," a common variant. 78 *night raven* The croaking of a raven was thought to be ominous, especially in the night [κ]. 87-8 *Stalk on . . . fowl sits* go on quietly; the bird has alighted and now is the time to catch him [κ]. 93 *Sits . . . corner* is that how the wind blows? 95 *enraged* madly passionate [κ]. 96 *past . . . thought* Thought can go infinitely beyond facts, but this love of hers is greater even than thought can imagine [κ].

sion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it. 100

PEDRO. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

CLAUD. [*aside*] Bait the hook well! This fish will bite.

LEON. What effects, my lord? She will sit you — you heard my daughter tell you how.

CLAUD. She did indeed. 105

PEDRO. How, how, I pray you? You amaze me. I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

LEON. I would have sworn it had, my lord — especially against Benedick. 110

BENE. [*aside*] I should think this a gull but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it. Knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.

CLAUD. [*aside*] He hath ta'en th' infection. Hold it up.

PEDRO. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick? 115

LEON. No, and swears she never will. That's her torment.

CLAUD. 'Tis true indeed. So your daughter says. "Shall I," says she, "that have so oft encount'ed him with scorn, write to him that I love him?"

LEON. This says she now when she is beginning to write to him; 120
for she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper. My daughter tells us all.

CLAUD. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of. 125

LEON. O, when she had writ it, and was reading it over, she found "Benedick" and "Beatrice" between the sheet?

CLAUD. That.

100 *discovers* reveals, displays. 101 *effects* outward signs. 111 *a gull* a hoax.
114 *Hold it up* keep the game going. 118 *encount'ed* . . . *scorn* matched him
in contemptuous skirmishing [K]. 122 *smock* nightgown. 125 *us of F*¹; Q: "of
us." 127 *between the sheet* (a) in the folded sheet of paper (b) between the bed
sheets. 129 *halfpence* small pieces. 131 *flout* mock. 136 *patience* ability to
endure suffering. 137 *ecstasy* madness. 138 *overborne* overcome. 141 *other*

LEON. O, she tore the letter into a thousand halfpence, rail'd at herself that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her. "I measure him," says she, "by my own spirit; for I should flout him if he writ to me. Yea, though I love him, I should." 130

CLAUD. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses — "O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!" 135

LEON. She doth indeed; my daughter says so. And the ecstasy hath so much overborne her that my daughter is sometime afeard she will do a desperate outrage to herself. It is very true. 140

PEDRO. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

CLAUD. To what end? He would make but a sport of it and torment the poor lady worse.

PEDRO. An he should, it were an alms to hang him! She's an excellent sweet lady, and (out of all suspicion) she is virtuous. 145

CLAUD. And she is exceeding wise.

PEDRO. In everything but in loving Benedick.

LEON. O, my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian. 150

PEDRO. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me. I would have daff'd all other respects and made her half myself. I pray you tell Benedick of it and hear what 'a will say. 155

LEON. Were it good, think you?

other person or means. 142 *discover* reveal. 145 *alms* charitable deed. 146 *excellent sweet* very charming. "Excellent" is an adverb here [κ]. 150 *blood* natural impulse — almost equivalent to "human nature" [κ]. 151 *proofs* examples, instances. 154 *dotage* doting affection. 155 *daff'd all other respects* put aside (disregarded) all other considerations [κ].

- CLAUD. Hero thinks surely she will die; for she says she will die if he love her not, and she will die ere she make her love known, and she will die, if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness. 160
- PEDRO. She doth well. If she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it; for the man (as you know all) hath a contemptible spirit.
- CLAUD. He is a very proper man. 165
- PEDRO. He hath indeed a good outward happiness.
- CLAUD. Before God! and in my mind, very wise.
- PEDRO. He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.
- CLAUD. And I take him to be valiant.
- PEDRO. As Hector, I assure you; and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise, for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christianlike fear. 170
- LEON. If he do fear God, 'a must necessarily keep peace. If he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling. 175
- PEDRO. And so will he do; for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick and tell him of her love? 180
- CLAUD. Never tell him, my lord. Let her wear it out with good counsel.
- LEON. Nay, that's impossible; she may wear her heart out first.

158 *will die* is resolved to die. 161 *bate* abate, give up. *crossness* perversity, contrariness. 162 *make tender* make him an offer. 164 *contemptible* contemptuous, scornful. 165 *proper* handsome. 166 *a good outward happiness* an attractive exterior [K]. 170 *Hector* the Trojan hero, generally regarded by Elizabethans as a blustering braggart. 178 *by* to judge by. *large jests* indecent, bawdy jokes. 181-2 *wear it . . . counsel* work out her own cure by considering what is best for herself [K]. 188 *Dinner* In line 35 the time is defined as "evening." The Elizabethans dined at or about noon. Editor after editor has called attention to this apparent inconsistency. Perhaps Shakespeare made a slip; but, since "good evening" was the regular salutation after noon had struck, it

PEDRO. Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter. Let it cool the while. I love Benedick well, and I could wish 185 he would modestly examine himself to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady.

LEON. My lord, will you walk? Dinner is ready.

[*They walk away.*]

CLAUD. If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation. 190

PEDRO. Let there be the same net spread for her, and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry. The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter. That's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb show. Let us 195 send her to call him in to dinner.

Exeunt [Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato].

[*Benedick advances from the arbour.*]

BENE. This can be no trick. The conference was sadly borne; they have the truth of this from Hero; they seem to pity the lady. It seems her affections have their full bent. Love me? Why, it must be requited. I hear how I am 200 censur'd. They say I will bear myself proudly if I perceive the love come from her. They say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry. I must not seem proud. Happy are they that hear their detractions and can put them 205 to mending. They say the lady is fair — 'tis a truth,

may be that "evening" means merely "afternoon" and that dinner was a little late — say at lunch time [κ]. 189 *upon this* as a result of this talk of ours (which he has overheard) [κ]. 192 *carry manage*. 193-4 *when they . . . dotage* when each thinks that the other is in love [κ]. 194 *no such matter* that is not the case. 195 *merely* entirely. *dumb show* pantomime (since neither will be able to speak, not being able to carry on their usual banter). 197 *sadly* seriously. *borne* carried on. 199 *have their full bent* are felt to the highest extent; are fully extended (a figure from archery). 201 *censur'd* judged. 205 *hear their detractions* hear themselves censured for their faults [κ]. 205-6 *put them to mending* undertake to cure themselves of those faults [κ].

I can bear them witness; and virtuous — 'tis so, I cannot reprove it; and wise, but for loving me — by my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. 210
 I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me because I have railed so long against marriage. But doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, 215
 the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married.

Enter Beatrice.

Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady! I do 220
 spy some marks of love in her.

BEAT. Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

BENE. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

BEAT. I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me. If it had been painful, I would not 225
 have come.

BENE. You take pleasure then in the message?

BEAT. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point, and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior. Fare you well. *Exit.* 230

BENE. Ha! "Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner." There's a double meaning in that. "I took no more pains for those thanks than you took pains to thank me." That's as much as to say, "Any pains that I

208 *reprove* disprove. 209-10 *argument* proof. 211-12 *odd quirks* . . . wit some few tricks of phrase and old fragments of wit [K]. 212 *broken on me* i.e. as a lance is broken in tilting. 214 *meat* food. 215 *quips* gibes. *sentences* wise (or would-be wise) sayings [K]. 216 *career of his humour* full pursuit of

take for you is as easy as thanks." If I do not take pity 235
of her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew.
I will go get her picture. *Exit.*

his inclination. 229 *a daw* a jackdaw — proverbially a stupid bird. Beatrice implies that she should be silly to take pleasure in doing Benedick a favour [κ]. *withal* with it. *stomach* appetite. 237 *picture* It was believed that one could fall in love by "feeding his eyes" upon the picture of a beautiful woman.

Act Three

[SCENE I. Leonato's orchard.]

Enter Hero and two Gentlewomen, Margaret and Ursula.

- HERO. Good Margaret, run thee to the parlour.
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
Proposing with the Prince and Claudio.
Whisper her ear and tell her, I and Ursley
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse 5
Is all of her. Say that thou overheard'st us;
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
Where honeysuckles, ripened by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter — like favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride 10
Against that power that bred it. There will she hide her
To listen our propose. This is thy office.
Bear thee well in it and leave us alone.
- MARG. I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently. [Exit.]
- HERO. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come, 15
As we do trace this alley up and down,

III.1. 3 *Proposing* talking, conversing. 7 *pleached* screened by vines and hedges. 10–11 *advance . . . bred it* carry their arrogance to such a height that they rebel against the ruler whose favour made them great [κ]. Some have suspected an allusion to the disgrace suffered by the Earl of Essex following his quarrel with the Queen in June of 1598, although it is unlikely that Shakespeare would refer unfavourably to Essex, of whose faction the Earl of Southampton was a strong supporter. 12 *our propose* to our talk. *office* part in the affair. 13 *Bear thee* play thy part. 14 *presently* immediately. 16 *trace this alley* stroll at a leisurely

Our talk must only be of Benedick.
 When I do name him, let it be thy part
 To praise him more than ever man did merit.
 My talk to thee must be how Benedick
 Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter
 Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
 That only wounds by hearsay.

20

Enter Beatrice.

Now begin;
 For look where Beatrice like a lapwing runs
 Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

25

[Beatrice hides in the arbour.]

URS. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
 Cut with her golden oars the silver stream
 And greedily devour the treacherous bait.
 So angle we for Beatrice, who even now
 Is couched in the woodbine coverture.
 Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

30

HERO. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
 Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.

[They approach the arbour.]

No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful.
 I know her spirits are as coy and wild
 As haggards of the rock.

35

URS. But are you sure
 That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely?

HERO. So says the Prince, and my new-trothed lord.

URS. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam?

pace along this walk [κ]. 21 *Of this matter* of such material as will make up this conversation [κ]. 22 *crafty arrow* i.e. the arrow that Cupid will choose in this particular case [κ]. 23 *only wounds by hearsay* wounds by hearsay only — by mere hearsay [κ]. 24 *lapwing* a bird which runs swiftly along the ground. It was proverbial for its cunning in protecting its nest. 27 *oars* fins. 30 *couched* hidden. *woodbine* honeysuckle. 36 *haggards* wild female hawks, impossible to train. 38 *new-trothed* newly betrothed.

- HERO. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it; 40
 But I persuaded them, if they lov'd Benedick,
 To wish him wrestle with affection
 And never to let Beatrice know of it.
- URS. Why did you so? Doth not the gentleman 45
 Deserve as full, as fortunate a bed
 As ever Beatrice shall couch upon?
- HERO. O god of love! I know he doth deserve 50
 As much as may be yielded to a man;
 But Nature never fram'd a woman's heart
 Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice.
 Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
 Misprizing what they look on; and her wit
 Values itself so highly that to her
 All matter else seems weak. She cannot love,
 Nor take no shape nor project of affection, 55
 She is so self-endear'd.
- URS. Sure I think so;
 And therefore certainly it were not good
 She knew his love, lest she'll make sport at it.
- HERO. Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man, 60
 How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featur'd,
 But she would spell him backward. If fair-fac'd,
 She would swear the gentleman should be her sister;
 If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antic,
 Made a foul blot; if tall, a lance ill-headed;
 If low, an agate very vilely cut; 65
 If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds;
 If silent, why, a block moved with none.

42 *wish him wrestle* advise him to wrestle. 44-6 *Doth not . . . upon* does Benedick not deserve as much prosperity and happiness in marriage as a match with Beatrice would bring him? [κ]. 48 *yielded* granted. 52 *Misprizing* despising, undervaluing. *what* whatever. 54 *All . . . weak* all subjects seem trivial to her except her own clever ideas and witty speeches [κ]. 55 *Nor . . . affection* nor form in her mind any clear conception — or, indeed, even a vague idea — of what love is [κ]. 56 *self-endear'd* in love with herself. 60 *How* however. *rarely featur'd* beautiful in face and form [κ]. 61 *spell him backward* turn all his good points into defects [κ]. 63 *black* of dark complexion. 63-4 *drawing . . . blot* in trying to draw a comic figure, succeeded only in making an ugly and shapeless

So turns she every man the wrong side out
 And never gives to truth and virtue that
 Which simpleness and merit purchaseth. 70

URS. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

HERO. No, not to be so odd, and from all fashions,
 As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable.
 But who dare tell her so? If I should speak,
 She would mock me into air; O, she would laugh me 75
 Out of myself, press me to death with wit!
 Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
 Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly.
 It were a better death than die with mocks,
 Which is as bad as die with tickling. 80

URS. Yet tell her of it. Hear what she will say.

HERO. No; rather I will go to Benedick
 And counsel him to fight against his passion.
 And truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
 To stain my cousin with. One doth not know 85
 How much an ill word may empoison liking.

URS. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong!
 She cannot be so much without true judgment
 (Having so swift and excellent a wit
 As she is priz'd to have) as to refuse 90
 So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

HERO. He is the only man of Italy,
 Always excepted my dear Claudio.

URS. I pray you be not angry with me, madam,
 Speaking my fancy: Signior Benedick, 95

one [K]. 65 *low* short of stature. *an agate* a tiny figure cut in the agate set in a ring [K]. 66 *with* by. 70 *simpleness* simplicity — i.e. sincerity of character, straightforwardness [K]. *purchaseth* deserve. 71 *carping* petty faultfinding. 72 *from all fashions* This phrase repeats and emphasizes the meaning of "odd" [K]. 76 *press me to death* Pressing to death by laying heavy weights upon the body was the regular English penalty for "standing mute," i.e. for refusing to plead "guilty" or "not guilty" when accused of felony [K]. 78 *waste inwardly* Every sigh was said to draw a drop of blood from the heart [K]. 84 *honest* honourable — i.e. not inconsistent with chastity [K]. 90 *priz'd to have* credited with having. 92 *the only man* the very best man.

For shape, for bearing, argument, and valour,
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

HERO. Indeed he hath an excellent good name.

URS. His excellence did earn it ere he had it.

When are you married, madam?

100

HERO. Why, every day to-morrow! Come, go in.
I'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

[*They walk away.*]

URS. She's lim'd, I warrant you! We have caught her, madam.

HERO. If it prove so, then loving goes by haps;
Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

105

Exeunt [Hero and Ursula].

[*Beatrice advances from the arbour.*]

BEAT. What fire is in mine ears? Can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!

No glory lives behind the back of such.

110

And, Benedick, love on; I will requite thee,

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.

If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in a holy band;

For others say thou dost deserve, and I

115

Believe it better than reportingly.

Exit.

96 *bearing* deportment. *argument* discourse — not “discussion” but “style in talk,” “ability to sustain his part in conversation” [K]. 101 *Why . . . to-morrow* why, I shall be a married woman every day of my life after tomorrow’s wedding! Hero’s reply twists the sense of Ursula’s question [K]. 103 *furnish* dress. 104 *lim’d* caught as with birdlime — a sticky substance smeared upon twigs to catch birds [K]. 105 *by haps* merely by luck and chance [K]. 107 *What . . . ears* what makes my ears burn so? An allusion to the old saying that, when our ears burn, it is a sign that somebody, somewhere, is talking about us — and not always to our credit [K]. 110 *No glory . . . of such* such persons (the proud and contemptuous) are never praised by others in their absence. 112 *Taming . . . hand* The meta-

- PEDRO. Draw it. 20
- BENE. Hang it!
- CLAUD. You must hang it first and draw it afterwards.
- PEDRO. What? sigh for the toothache?
- LEON. Where is but a humour or a worm.
- BENE. Well, every one can master a grief but he that has it. 25
- CLAUD. Yet say I he is in love.
- PEDRO. There is no appearance of fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises; as to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow; or in the shape of two countries at once, as a German from the waist downward, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is. 30
- CLAUD. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs. 'A brushes his hat o' mornings. What should that bode? 35
- PEDRO. Hath any man seen him at the barber's?
- CLAUD. No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuff'd tennis balls. 40

20 *Draw* The regular old word for "extracting" a tooth. Since to "draw" meant also to "eviscerate" — hanging, drawing, and quartering being the regular punishment for traitors — Don Pedro's "draw" suggests hanging, and Benedick curses his tooth with a "Hang it!" This reminds Claudio of the teeth he has seen hung up as signs in the shop windows of barbers (the dentists of those days), and he remarks that whereas in the regular course of events a tooth had to be drawn before it was hung up, Benedick should follow the executioner's practice — hang the culprit first and then draw him [K]. 24 *a humour or a worm* Toothaches were believed to be caused either by morbid secretions (humours) coming down from the head, or by worms which bored holes in the teeth. 26 *Yet* in spite of everything; no matter what anybody else says [K]. 27 *fancy* love. 27-8 *a fancy* a whim. 28 *strange disguises* Don Pedro applies to Benedick the satirical jest that in Shakespeare's day was often used to describe the fantastic attire of English gallants. Thus Portia (MERCHANT OF VENICE, I.ii.68-70) says of her English wooer: "How oddly he is suited! I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his

- LEON. Indeed he looks younger than he did, by the loss of a beard.
- PEDRO. Nay, 'a rubs himself with civet. Can you smell him out by that? 45
- CLAUD. That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.
- PEDRO. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.
- CLAUD. And when was he wont to wash his face?
- PEDRO. Yea, or to paint himself? for the which I hear what they say of him. 50
- CLAUD. Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is new-crept into a lute-string, and now govern'd by stops.
- PEDRO. Indeed that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude, conclude, he is in love.
- CLAUD. Nay, but I know who loves him. 55
- PEDRO. That would I know too. I warrant, one that knows him not.
- CLAUD. Yes, and his ill conditions; and in despite of all, dies for him.
- PEDRO. She shall be buried with her face upwards. 60
- BENE. Yet is this no charm for the toothache. Old signior, walk aside with me. I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

[*Exeunt Benedick and Leonato.*]

round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behaviour everywhere" [κ]. 31 *slops* loose breeches. 32 *doublet* a close-fitting jacket. Long cloaks were the fashion in Spain [κ]. 33 *no fool for fancy* not befooled by love; no victim of love [κ]. 37 *bode* portend, signify. 40-1 *old ornament . . . tennis balls* i.e. he has been shaved, thus assuming the appearance of lover rather than soldier. Tennis balls were stuffed with hair. 44 *civet* a favourite perfume in old times. It comes from the civet cat [κ]. 47 *note* mark, sign. 48 *wont* accustomed. *wash his face* i.e. with cosmetics [κ]. 51 *new-crept* BOAS; Q: "now crept." 52 *govern'd by stops* so controlled by his love that it does not run without restraint, as of yore. "Stops" or "frets" are small bars of wire or wood on a musical instrument to guide the fingering by indicating the division into notes [κ]. 53 *heavy* sad. 58 *conditions* character traits. *despite* spite. 61 *charm* cure. There were many charms for curing toothache. 63 *hobby-horses* silly jokers. The hobby-horse, ridden by a man astride, was a ludicrous character in the old May games and morris dances [κ].

PEDRO. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice!

CLAUD. 'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played 65
their parts with Beatrice, and then the two bears will not
bite one another when they meet.

Enter John the Bastard.

JOHN. My lord and brother, God save you.

PEDRO. Good den, brother.

JOHN. If your leisure serv'd, I would speak with you. 70

PEDRO. In private?

JOHN. If it please you. Yet Count Claudio may hear, for what
I would speak of concerns him.

PEDRO. What's the matter?

JOHN. [*to Claudio*] Means your lordship to be married to- 75
morrow?

PEDRO. You know he does.

JOHN. I know not that, when he knows what I know.

CLAUD. If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

JOHN. You may think I love you not. Let that appear hereafter, 80
and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For
my brother, I think he holds you well and in dearness
of heart hath help to effect your ensuing marriage —
surely suit ill spent and labour ill bestowed!

PEDRO. Why, what's the matter? 85

JOHN. I came hither to tell you, and, circumstances short'ned
(for she has been too long a-talking of), the lady is dis-
loyal.

65 *Margaret* It was Ursula who joined Hero in playing the trick on Beatrice (III.1), but Margaret also had an important share in the game (III.1.1-14) [K].
69 *Good den* good e'en — i.e. good even; good afternoon. The regular salutation after midday [K]. 74 *matter* subject matter. 79 *discover* reveal. 80 *that* the question whether I am your friend or not [K]. 81 *aim better at me* have a better understanding of my feelings toward you [K]. *by that* by means of that which. *For* as for. 82 *holds you well* has a high regard for you. 83 *help* helped. 84 *bestowed* spent, used. 85 *Why . . . matter* Don Pedro repeats his question (line 74), impatient at Don John's delay in answering it [K]. 86 *circumstances short'ned* to cut short all talk about matters of detail [K]. 87 *she . . . a-talking*

CLAUD. Who? Hero?

JOHN. Even she — Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's 90
Hero.

CLAUD. Disloyal?

JOHN. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness. I
could say she were worse; think you of a worse title, and
I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant. Go 95
but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber window
ent'red, even the night before her wedding day. If you
love her then, to-morrow wed her. But it would better
fit your honour to change your mind.

CLAUD. May this be so? 100

PEDRO. I will not think it.

JOHN. If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you
know. If you will follow me, I will show you enough;
and when you have seen more and heard more, proceed
accordingly. 105

CLAUD. If I see anything to-night why I should not marry her
to-morrow, in the congregation where I should wed,
there will I shame her.

PEDRO. And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with
thee to disgrace her. 110

JOHN. I will disparage her no farther till you are my witnesses.
Bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show
itself.

PEDRO. O day untowardly turned!

of we have spent more time in talking about her than she deserves [κ]. 87-8
disloyal unfaithful. 93 *paint out* describe fully. 95 *till further warrant* until
you have further evidence to confirm my words [κ]. 102-3 *If you dare not . . .*
know if you have not strength of mind enough to believe your eyes, then do not
admit the truth of what you know. When I show you the truth, either recognize
it, or deny your knowledge of plain facts [κ]. 107 *congregation* company. 111
are my witnesses can confirm the truth of what I say. 112 *coldly* with patience.
112-13 *let . . . itself* let the result of your observation serve as a proof of the fact
[κ]. 114 *untowardly turned* changed from a day of joy to a day of sorrow [κ].

DOG. • You have. I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give God thanks and make no boast of it; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch. Therefore bear you the lanthorn. This is your charge: you shall comprehend all vagrom men; you are to bid any man stand, in the Prince's name. 20

2. WATCH. How if 'a will not stand?

DOG. Why then, take no note of him, but let him go, and presently call the rest of the watch together and thank God you are rid of a knave. 25

VERG. If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the Prince's subjects.

DOG. True, and they are to meddle with none but the Prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets; for for the watch to babble and to talk is most tolerable, and not to be endured. 30

2. WATCH. We will rather sleep than talk. We know what belongs to a watch. 35

DOG. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend. Only have a care that your bills be not stol'n. Well, you are to call at all the alehouses and bid those that are drunk get them to bed. 40

2. WATCH. How if they will not?

DOG. Why then, let them alone till they are sober. If they make

amusing. Shakespeare's creative power has made caricatures become characters [κ]. 5 *allegiance* He means "lack of allegiance." 7 *charge* instructions. 8 *desartless* deserving. 8-9 *constable* chief watchman. 13 *a good name* Doubtless Dogberry means "a good reputation," but he seems to be congratulating Sea-coal on the beauty of his family name [κ]. *well-favoured* handsome. 17 *favour* face, features. 19 *such vanity* such a piece of showy frivolity. But perhaps Dogberry means "such a valuable accomplishment" [κ]. 21 *lanthorn* An old form of "lantern," probably due to the fact that lanterns were often made of a thin sheet of horn [κ]. 22 *comprehend* apprehend. *vagrom* vagrant. 30 *meddle* concern themselves. 34-5 *belongs to* is proper for. 38 *bills* halberds, pikes — weapons consisting of axe-heads fixed on long poles.

you not then the better answer, you may say they are not the men you took them for.

2. WATCH. Well, sir.

45

DOG. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man; and for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

2. WATCH. If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him? 50

DOG. Truly, by your office you may; but I think they that touch pitch will be defil'd. The most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company. 55

VERG. You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

DOG. Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will, much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

VERG. If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse and bid her still it. 60

2. WATCH. How if the nurse be asleep and will not hear us?

DOG. Why then, depart in peace and let the child wake her with crying; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes will never answer a calf when he bleats.

VERG. 'Tis very true. 65

DOG. This is the end of the charge: you, constable, are to present the Prince's own person. If you meet the Prince in the night, you may stay him.

VERG. Nay, by'r lady, that I think 'a cannot.

43-4 *they are not . . . for* you are disappointed in them [κ]. 47 *true* honest. 48 *make* have business, associate. 48-9 *the more . . . honesty* the better for your respectability [κ]. 53 *touch pitch . . . defil'd* A text from ECCLESIASTIES, XIII, 1 (in the so-called APOCRYPHA): "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith" [κ]. 54 *take* arrest. 64 *never answer a calf* Thus Dogberry — though without any such intention — calls the watchman a calf [κ]. 66-7 *present* represent. 71 *statutes* Q; F¹: "statues," which some editors follow so as to give Dogberry an additional blunder. *without* unless. 74 *I think it be so* The subjunc-

DOG. Five shillings to one on't with any man that knows the statutes, he may stay him! Marry, not without the Prince be willing; for indeed the watch ought to offend no man, and it is an offence to stay a man against his will. 70

VERG. By'r lady, I think it be so.

DOG. Ha, ah, ha! Well, masters, good night. An there be any matter of weight chances, call up me. Keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good night. Come, neighbour. 75

2. WATCH. Well, masters, we hear our charge. Let us go sit here upon the church bench till two, and then all to bed. 80

DOG. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night. Adieu. Be vigilant, I beseech you. *Exeunt [Dogberry and Verges].*

Enter Borachio and Conrade.

BORA. What, Conrade! 85

2. WATCH. [*aside*] Peace! stir not!

BORA. Conrade, I say!

CON. Here, man. I am at thy elbow.

BORA. Mass, and my elbow itch'd! I thought there would a scab follow. 90

CON. I will owe thee an answer for that; and now forward with thy tale.

BORA. Stand thee close then under this penthouse, for it drizzles

tive in indirect discourse is an old idiom. It does not indicate doubt [κ]. 77 *counsels* secrets. 83 *coil* hubbub, turmoil. 84 *vigilant* He means "vigilant." 89 *Mass* A mere interjection; originally an oath by the mass [κ]. *my elbow itch'd* A traditional sign that somebody would soon be "at his elbow" [κ]. *scab* There is a pun on the word in the sense of "rogue" or "scurvy fellow." 91 *I will owe . . . that* I won't answer that gibe now, but I shall not forget that I owe you a smart reply [κ]. 93 *penthouse* a "lean-to" or open shed having a roof with a single slope.

rain, and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

2. WATCH. [*aside*] Some treason, masters. Yet stand close. 95

BORA. Therefore know I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

CON. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear?

BORA. Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villainy should be so rich; for when rich villains have need of 100 poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

CON. I wonder at it.

BORA. That shows thou art unconfirm'd. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man. 105

CON. Yes, it is apparel.

BORA. I mean the fashion.

CON. Yes, the fashion is the fashion.

BORA. Tush! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is? 110

2. WATCH. [*aside*] I know that Deformed. 'A has been a vile thief this seven year; 'a goes up and down like a gentleman. I remember his name.

BORA. Didst thou not hear somebody?

CON. No; t'was the vane on the house. 115

BORA. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief this fashion is? how giddily 'a turns about all the hot-bloods between

94 *like a true drunkard* a genuine drunkard, who cannot hold his tongue — for “in vino veritas.” The name “Borachio” means “drunkard” (Spanish “Bor-racho”), but Borachio, though he has of course been drinking, is by no means drunk [K]. 98 *dear* expensive. 100 *should be so rich* Borachio echoes Conrade’s word “villainy” and personifies it: “The wonder is rather that villainy can afford to pay so high a price to get itself perpetuated” [K]. 103 *unconfirm’d* inexperienced (in villainy). 103–5 *the fashion . . . man* i.e. although fashions in clothes are inconstant and changeable, they are not so inconstant as man himself. 110 *deformed thief* contorted, shapeless rascal — having no constant or symmetrical figure; “and so,” Borachio continues, “he sees to it that those who follow him have likewise no constancy” (lines 117–18 [K]). 112 *goes . . . a gentleman* goes about dressed like a gentleman. 119 *reechy* smoky. 120 *Bel’s priests* the priests

fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting, sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church window, sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirch'd worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club? 120

CON. All this I see; and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy 125 with the fashion too, that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion?

BORA. Not so neither. But know that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero. She leans me out at her mistress' chamber window, bids me a thousand times good night — I tell this tale vilely; I should first tell thee how the Prince, Claudio, and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter. 135

CON. And thought they Margaret was Hero?

BORA. Two of them did, the Prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possess'd them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enrag'd; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with 140

of Baal in the legend of Bel and the Dragon in the biblical APOCRYPHA [K]. 121 *the shaven Hercules* This must have been an eccentric representation of a scene from the romantic episode of Hercules and Omphale. At all events it does not accord with any known version of the tale [K]. He may be confusing Hercules with Samson. 122 *codpiece* a bagged appendage to the breeches, often highly ornamented. 125-6 *giddy with the fashion* just as changeable as the fashion is [K]. 133-4 *possessed* (a) taken possession of — as if Don John were a demon who had got them completely under his control [K] (b) informed. 135 *amiable encounter* meeting of lovers. 137-8 *the devil my master* so called because he has "possessed" the others. 139 *possess'd* took possession of — and so made them ready to believe anything [K]. 143 *as he was appointed* according to his appointment [K].

- URS. I will, lady.
- HERO. And bid her come hither.
- URS. Well. [Exit.] 5
- MARG. Troth, I think your other rebato were better.
- HERO. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.
- MARG. By my troth 's not so good, and I warrant your cousin will say so.
- HERO. My cousin 's a fool, and thou art another. I'll wear none 10
but this.
- MARG. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner; and your gown 's a most rare fashion, i' faith. I saw the Duchess of Milan's gown that they praise so. 15
- HERO. O, that exceeds, they say.
- MARG. By my troth, 's but a nightgown in respect of yours — cloth-o'-gold and cuts, and lac'd with silver, set with pearls down sleeves, side-sleeves, and skirts, round underborne with a bluish tinsel. But for a fine, quaint, graceful, 20
and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't.
- HERO. God give me joy to wear it! for my heart is exceeding heavy.
- MARG. 'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.
- HERO. Fie upon thee! art not ashamed? 25
- MARG. Of what, lady? of speaking honourably? Is not marriage honourable in a beggar? Is not your lord honourable

III.iv. 1 *desire* request. 6 *rebato* a tall stiff collar or ruff, usually of wired lace. *were* would be. 12 *tire* elaborate ornamented headdress. *within* i.e. the one which is in the inner room [κ]. *hair* i.e. in the headdress. 16 *exceeds* surpasses all others. 17 *nightgown* dressing gown. *in respect of* when compared with. 18 *cloth-o'-gold* cloth with gold threads woven in. *cuts* slashes or openings in the skirt, which were either trimmed elaborately or filled in with a different material [κ]. *lac'd with silver* with silver threads arranged in an elaborate pattern, often diagonal. 19 *down down* along. *side-sleeves* Besides the real sleeves (for the arms) there was a pair of wide, open-hanging sleeves — merely for ornament [κ]. 19-20 *round underborne* trimmed round the under edge of the skirt [κ]. 20 *quaint* elegant. 23 *heavy* sad. 27 *in a beggar* even in a beggar.

without marriage? I think you would have me say, "saving your reverence, a husband." An bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend nobody. Is there any harm in "the heavier for a husband"? None, I think, an it be the right husband and the right wife. Otherwise 'tis light, and not heavy. Ask my Lady Beatrice else. Here she comes. 30

Enter Beatrice.

- HERO. Good morrow, coz. 35
- BEAT. Good morrow, sweet Hero.
- HERO. Why, how now? Do you speak in the sick tune?
- BEAT. I am out of all other tune, methinks.
- MARG. Clap's into "Light o' love." That goes without a burden. Do you sing it, and I'll dance it. 40
- BEAT. Yea, "Light o' love" with your heels! then, if your husband have stables enough, you'll see he shall lack no barnes.
- MARG. O illegitimate construction! I scorn that with my heels.
- BEAT. 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin; 'tis time you were ready. 45
By my troth, I am exceeding ill. Hey-ho!
- MARG. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband?
- BEAT. For the letter that begins them all, H.

28-9 *saving your reverence* This formula was often used in mentioning something indecent or unpleasant, to assure the person addressed that no disrespect was intended. Margaret means that Hero is so prudish that even the word "husband" cannot be mentioned without an apology for freedom of speech [K]. 29-30 *An bad . . . true speaking* unless impure thoughts in the hearer's mind twist the sense of what is innocently meant by the speaker [K]. 32 *'tis light* she is licentious — with a very common pun. 33 *Ask . . . else* ask my Lady Beatrice if what I say is not true, for she is a good judge of tricks of speech [K]. 37 *sick tune* Hero has answered in a melancholy tone, for she has a presentiment of ill fortune [K]. 39 *Clap's into "Light o' love"* change your tune immediately into the joy of loving. Probably there is a pun on "light" in the sense of "inconstant." The tune of the song has come down to us (see Chappell, *POPULAR MUSIC OF THE OLDEN TIMES*, I, 224), but the words are lost [K]. *burden* refrain or undersong (with a pun on the sense of "heavier for a husband"). 41 *with your heels* To be "light at heels" in Elizabethan slang was to be "unchaste." 43 *barnes* bairns, children — with an obvious pun [K]. 44 *illegitimate construction* (a) wrong interpretation (b) act of making bastards. 45 *five o'clock* Marriages at this early

- MARG. Well, an you be not turn'd Turk, there's no more sailing
by the star. 50
- BEAT. What means the fool, trow?
- MARG. Nothing I; but God sent every one their heart's desire!
- HERO. These gloves the Count sent me, they are an excellent
perfume.
- BEAT. I am stuff'd, cousin; I cannot smell. 55
- MARG. A maid, and stuff'd! There's goodly catching of cold.
- BEAT. O, God help me! God help me! How long have you pro-
fess'd apprehension?
- MARG. Ever since you left it. Doth not my wit become me
rarely? 60
- BEAT. It is not seen enough. You should wear it in your cap.
By my troth, I am sick.
- MARG. Get you some of this distill'd carduus benedictus and
lay it to your heart. It is the only thing for a qualm.
- HERO. There thou prick'st her with a thistle. 65
- BEAT. Benedictus? why benedictus? You have some moral in
this "benedictus."
- MARG. Moral? No, by my troth, I have no moral meaning; I
meant plain holy thistle. You may think perchance that
I think you are in love. Nay, by'r lady, I am not such a 70

hour were not uncommon. 48 *the letter* . . . *H* an ache (pronounced "aitch") [K]. 49-50 *Well* . . . *star* Margaret implies that Beatrice's illness is an aching heart: "Well, if you haven't been false to your faith (renounced your vow never to marry), there's no trusting to the plainest signs—we can no longer put faith in the North Star as an indication of the points of the compass when we sail the seas [K]. 51 *trow* do you believe. 54 *perfume* Perfumed gloves were fashionable in old times [K]. 56 *and stuff'd* have a head cold. Margaret takes the term in another sense. 57-8 *profess'd* taken as your profession, claimed mastery of. 58 *apprehension* quickness of wit. Margaret in her reply takes the word to mean "sense" or "judgment," which she accuses Beatrice of having "left" or "abandoned." 61 *in your cap* like a feather (where all could see it). 63 *carduus benedictus* blessed thistle, regarded in Shakespeare's day as the sovereign cure for all ailments. There is an obvious pun on Benedick's name. 64 *the only* . . . *qualm* the very best remedy for an attack of faintness [K]. There is a play, borne out in the following line, on "thing" in the common slang sense of "sex organ." 66 *moral* figurative meaning.

- DOG. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.
- LEON. Brief, I pray you; for you see it is a busy time with me.
- DOG. Marry, this it is, sir. 5
- VERG. Yes, in truth it is, sir.
- LEON. What is it, my good friends?
- DOG. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter — an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin 10 between his brows.
- VERG. Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honester than I.
- DOG. Comparisons are odorous. Palabras, neighbour Verges.
- LEON. Neighbours, you are tedious. 15
- DOG. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor Duke's officers; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.
- LEON. All thy tediousness on me, ah? 20
- DOG. Yea, an 'twere a thousand pound more than 'tis; for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.
- VERG. And so am I. 25

may say of the way in which my tongue runs, you cannot deny that it tells the truth — you are in love" [K].

III.v. s.d. *Headborough* local constable. 2 *confidence* private conversation. 3 *decerns* concerns. 8 *Goodman* The regular title for one just below the rank of gentleman [K]. a *little off the matter* not quite to the point [K]. *little off* CAPELL; Q, F¹: "little of." 9 *blunt* He means "sharp." 14 *odorous* He means "odious." *Palabras* for the Spanish "pocas palabras," i.e. "few words," "don't talk too much" [K]. 16 *It pleases . . . so* He takes "tedious" in the sense of "rich" or "prosperous," as if Leonato were paying him a compliment [K]. 19 *it all* all my "tediousness" — all the wealth I have [K]. 22 *as good exclamation on* as good acclamation of, as good report concerning [K]. An "exclamation on" might also refer to the "hue and cry" after a criminal, or an "accusation against."

- LEON. I would fain know what you have to say.
- VERG. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.
- DOG. A good old man, sir; he will be talking. As they say, 30
 "When the age is in, the wit is out." God help us! it is
 a world to see! Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges.
 Well, God 's a good man. An two men ride of a horse,
 one must ride behind. An honest soul, i' faith, sir, by
 my troth he is, as ever broke bread; but God is to be 35
 worshipp'd; all men are not alike, alas, good neighbour!
- LEON. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.
- DOG. Gifts that God gives.
- LEON. I must leave you.
- DOG. One word, sir. Our watch, sir, have indeed compre- 40
 hended two aspicious persons, and we would have them
 this morning examined before your worship.
- LEON. Take their examination yourself and bring it me. I am
 now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.
- DOG. It shall be suffigance. 45
- LEON. Drink some wine ere you go. Fare you well.
- [Enter a Messenger.]
- MESS. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her
 husband.

27-8 *excepting . . . presence* A perverted apologetic formula. Dogberry means: "If your honour will pardon me for using such words in speaking to you." His words, however, mean, literally, that 'the knaves who have been arrested are the greatest rascals in Messina "except your honourable self" [k]. 31 *When . . . out* Dogberry's perversion of the old saying "When the wine is in, the wit is out" [k]. He strings out a series of old proverbs, each in perverted form. 31-2 *it is a world to see* it is a wonderful thing to behold (an old proverb). 33 *God's a good man* A quaint old phrase for "God is good." If Dogberry means anything in particular, his intention is to thank God for making him wiser than Verges [k]. 34 *one must ride behind* Dogberry implies that it is the natural order of things for Verges to be his inferior in wisdom [k]. Another proverb. 38 *Gifts that God gives* Thus Dogberry piously ascribes his superiority to the grace of God — not to any merit of his own [k]. 40-1 *comprehended* for "apprehended." 41

LEON. I'll wait upon them. I am ready.

[*Exeunt Leonato and Messenger.*]

DOG. Go, good partner, go get you to Francis Seacoal; bid him
bring his pen and inkhorn to the jail. We are now to ex- 50
amination these men.

VERG. And we must do it wisely.

DOG. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you. Here's that shall
drive some of them to a noncome. Only get the learned 55
writer to set down our excommunication, and meet me
at the jail. *Exeunt.*

aspicious for "suspicious." 45 *suffigance* sufficiency — i.e. what you say shall suffice; we shall follow your orders [κ]. 47 *stay* wait. 49 *wait upon* attend, escort. 50 *Francis Seacoal* This is the town clerk of IV.ii., not to be confused with the constable, George Seacole of III.iii., who could not read or write. 51–2 *examination* Q; F¹: "examine." There is no need to depart from Q, since the error is quite in character. 54 *We will . . . wit* we will not fail to use wisdom in our examination of them [κ]. *Here's that* here (in this head of mine) is that which [κ]. 55 *a noncome* a "non compos mentis." This phrase, which signifies "not of a sound mind," is understood by Dogberry to mean "a non-plus," i.e. a condition in which one does not know what to say or do [κ]. 56 *our excommunication* the details of our examination of them. Dogberry regards this word as more emphatic than "examination" [κ].

Act Four



[SCENE I. *A church.*]

Enter Don Pedro, [John the] Bastard, Leonato, Friar [Francis], Claudio, Benedick, Hero, Beatrice, [and Attendants].

LEON. Come, Friar Francis, be brief. Only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

FRIAR. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

CLAUD. No.

5

LEON. To be married to her. Friar, you come to marry her.

FRIAR. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count?

HERO. I do.

FRIAR. If either of you know any inward impediment why you should not be conjoined, I charge you on your souls to utter it. 10

CLAUD. Know you any, Hero?

IV.1. 1 *Only to the plain form* proceed only as far as the simple formula of the marriage ceremony prescribes [κ]. 2 *their particular duties* It was the custom for the priest or clergyman to preface the marriage ceremony with a brief sermon on the duties of husband and wife [κ]. 9 *inward* secret, undisclosed. 18-19 *interjections . . . ah, ha, he* Benedick quotes Lily's LATIN GRAMMAR — the standard textbook in Shakespeare's time and long after: "Some [interjections] are of

- HERO. None, my lord.
- FRIAR. Know you any, Count?
- LEON. I dare make his answer — none. 15
- CLAUD. O, what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!
- BENE. How now? interjections? Why then, some be of laughing, as, ah, ha, he!
- CLAUD. Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave: 20
Will you with free and unconstrained soul
Give me this maid your daughter?
- LEON. As freely, son, as God did give her me.
- CLAUD. And what have I to give you back whose worth
May counterpoise this rich and precious gift? 25
- PEDRO. Nothing, unless you render her again.
- CLAUD. Sweet Prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.
There, Leonato, take her back again.
Give not this rotten orange to your friend.
She's but the sign and semblance of her honour. 30
Behold how like a maid she blushes here!
O, what authority and show of truth
Can cunning sin cover itself withal!
Comes not that blood as modest evidence
To witness simple virtue? Would you not swear, 35
All you that see her, that she were a maid
By these exterior shows? But she is none:
She knows the heat of a luxurious bed;
Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Laughing: as, Ha, ha, he" (ed. 1651, p. 38) [κ]. 25 *counterpoise* weigh equal with, counterbalance. 26 *render her* give her back. 27 *learn* teach. 30 *but the sign and semblance* merely the outward false appearance. 32 *authority* . . . truth assurance and outward semblance of truth [κ]. 33 *withal* with. 35 *witness* give evidence of. 37 *exterior shows* outward appearances. 38 *luxurious* lecherous, lustful.

- LEON. What do you mean, my lord?
- CLAUD. Not to be married, 40
Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.
- LEON. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth
And made defeat of her virginity —
- CLAUD. I know what you would say. If I have known her, 45
You will say she did embrace me as a husband,
And so extenuate the forehead sin.
No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large,
But, as a brother to his sister, show'd 50
Bashful sincerity and comely love.
- HERO. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you?
- CLAUD. Out on thee seeming! I will write against it.
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown; 55
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamp'ring animals
That rage in savage sensuality.
- HERO. Is my lord well that he doth speak so wide?
- LEON. Sweet Prince, why speak not you?
- PEDRO. What should I speak? 60
I stand dishonour'd that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.
- LEON. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?
- JOHN. Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

41 *approved* proved. *wanton* loose woman. 42 *proof* experience. 47 *the forehead sin* the sinfulness of anticipating the proper time [κ]. 49 *large* broad, free, immodest [κ]. 51 *comely* becoming. 53 *thee* Q; KNIGHT, K: "the." *seeming* pretence, hypocrisy. *write against it* write satires to denounce it [κ]. 54 *Dian* Diana, goddess of the moon and of virginity. *orb* sphere. 55 *blown* in blossom. 56 *intemperate* ungoverned. *blood* passion. 59 *speak so wide* talk so wildly — so far from the obvious facts [κ]. 61 *gone about* undertaken, planned. 62 *stale* harlot. 70 *move* propose. 71 *that fatherly and kindly power* that natural authority that you have as her father [κ]. 76 *answer . . . name* admit that the

- BENE. This looks not like a nuptial.
- HERO. "True!" O God! 65
- CLAUD. Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the Prince? Is this the Prince's brother?
Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?
- LEON. All this is so; but what of this, my lord?
- CLAUD. Let me but move one question to your daughter, 70
And by that fatherly and kindly power
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.
- LEON. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.
- HERO. O, God defend me! How am I beset!
What kind of catechising call you this? 75
- CLAUD. To make you answer truly to your name.
- HERO. Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name
With any just reproach?
- CLAUD. Marry, that can Hero!
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talk'd with you yesternight, 80
Out at your window betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.
- HERO. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.
- PEDRO. Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear. Upon mine honour, 85
Myself, my brother, and this grieved Count
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber window,
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had 90

name by which you have been called is really yours. The name is "common stale" (line 62). Hero does not understand the question [κ]. 78 *Marry, that can Hero* indeed, Hero herself can do so. 79 *Hero itself* the very word Hero has become a name for a harlot [κ]. 82 *if you are . . . this* if you are a maid, you can answer this question in such a way as will prove your innocence [κ]. 84 *then are you no maiden* your reply proves that you cannot answer that question truthfully without admitting your guilt [κ]. 86 *grieved* aggrieved, wronged. 89 *liberal* licentious in speech as in actions [κ].

A thousand times in secret.

JOHN. Fie, fie! they are not to be nam'd, my lord —
Not to be spoke of;
There is not chastity enough in language
Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady, 95
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

CLAUD. O Hero! what a Hero hadst thou been
If half thy outward graces had been plac'd
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart!
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair! Farewell, 100
Thou pure impiety and impious purity!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious. 105

LEON. Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?

[Hero swoons.]

BEAT. Why, how now, cousin? Wherefore sink you down?

JOHN. Come let us go. These things, come thus to light,
Smother her spirits up.

[Exeunt Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio.]

BENE. How doth the lady?

BEAT. Dead, I think. Help, uncle! 110
Hero! why, Hero! Uncle! Signior Benedick! Friar!

LEON. O Fate, take not away thy heavy hand!
Death is the fairest cover for her shame
That may be wish'd for.

96 *much misgovernment* great misconduct. 99 *thoughts and counsels* secret thoughts. 102 *For thee* because of thee (and thy guilt). 103 *conjecture* suspicion. 104 *thoughts of harm* harmful (condemnatory) thoughts [κ]. 105 *never . . . gracious* nevermore shall beauty seem beautiful to me [κ]. 109 *spirits* vital forces. 119 *The story . . . her blood* the story whose truth her blushes made perfectly clear—as plain as print [κ]. 122 *shames* feelings of shame. 123 *on the rearward of reproaches* after upbraiding thee [κ]. 124 *but one* but one

- BEAT. How now, cousin Hero?
- FRIAR. Have comfort, lady. 115
- LEON. Dost thou look up?
- FRIAR. Yea, wherefore should she not?
- LEON. Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing
 Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
 The story that is printed in her blood?
 Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes; 120
 For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
 Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
 Myself would on the rearward of reproaches
 Strike at thy life. Griev'd I, I had but one?
 Chid I for that at frugal Nature's frame? 125
 O, one too much by thee! Why had I one?
 Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes?
 Why had I not with charitable hand
 Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
 Who smirched thus and mir'd with infamy, 130
 I might have said, "No part of it is mine;
 This shame derives itself from unknown loins"?
 But mine, and mine I lov'd, and mine I prais'd,
 And mine that I was proud on — mine so much
 That I myself was to myself not mine, 135
 Valuing of her — why, she, O, she is fall'n
 Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea
 Hath drops too few to wash her clean again,
 And salt too little which may season give
 To her foul tainted flesh!
- BENE. Sir, sir, be patient. 140
 For my part, I am so attir'd in wonder,

child. 125 *frugal Nature's frame* the parsimony of Nature in her plan as to my offspring [κ]. 129 *issue* child. 134-6 *mine so much . . . Valuing of her* she who was so much my beloved that, in comparison, I hardly cared for myself at all, since I valued her so highly [κ]. 139 *may season give* can restore to soundness — literally, can preserve from decay [κ]. Salt was the common preservative for meat in Shakespeare's day. 140 *patient* calm, self-controlled. 141 *attir'd in wonder* Figures from clothing are common in Shakespeare [κ].

I know not what to say.

BEAT. O, on my soul, my cousin is belied!

BENE. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night?

BEAT. No, truly, not; although, until last night, 145
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

LEON. Confirm'd, confirm'd! O, that is stronger made
Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron!
Would the two princes lie? and Claudio lie,
Who lov'd her so that, speaking of her foulness, 150
Wash'd it with tears? Hence from her! let her die.

FRIAR. Hear me a little;
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady. I have mark'd 155
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face, a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes,
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire
To burn the errors that these princes hold 160
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool;
Trust not my reading nor my observation,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenure of my book; trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity, 165
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

LEON. Friar, it cannot be.
Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left

143 *belied* slandered. 153-5 *I have only . . . the lady* the only reason why I have so long remained silent and allowed fortune thus to run its course, is because I have been observing the lady [κ]. 156 *apparitions* Thus the Friar personifies Hero's blushes [κ]. 160 *To burn the errors* as heretics, holding false opinions, are burned at the stake. A natural metaphor for an ecclesiastic to use. The idea was that the errors were to be purged away by fire [κ]. *hold* maintain. 162 *reading* ability to read character [κ]. 162-4 *my observation . . . my book* my observation of life, which, by the seal of experience, confirms my interpretation of what I have read in her face [κ]. Such book metaphors are common in Shakespeare. 165 *reverence* sacred profession. *calling* my priestly office (which has given me skill in reading character as a father confessor) [κ]. *divinity* my

Is that she will not add to her damnation
 A sin of perjury: she not denies it. 170
 Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
 That which appears in proper nakedness?

FRIAR. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?

HERO. They know that do accuse me; I know none.
 If I know more of any man alive 175
 Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
 Let all my sins lack mercy! O my father,
 Prove you that any man with me convers'd
 At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
 Maintain'd the change of words with any creature, 180
 Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death!

FRIAR. There is some strange misprision in the princes.

BENE. Two of them have the very bent of honour;
 And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
 The practice of it lives in John the bastard, 185
 Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.

LEON. I know not. If they speak but truth of her,
 These hands shall tear her. If they wrong her honour,
 The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
 Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine, 190
 Nor age so eat up my invention,
 Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,
 Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
 But they shall find awak'd in such a kind
 Both strength of limb and policy of mind, 195
 Ability in means, and choice of friends,

theological study and training [κ]. 167 *Under* as the victim of. 168 *grace* virtue. 172 *proper* its own. 178 *Prove you* if you can prove. 179 *unmeet* improper. 180 *Maintain'd* . . . words engaged in conversation. 181 *Refuse me* cast me off, disown me. 182 *misprision* misunderstanding. 183 *have the very bent of honour* are entirely devoted to honour in thought and action [κ]. 185 *practice* plotting. *lives in* owes its life and strength to [κ]. 186 *Whose* . . . *villainies* whose whole strength is used to the utmost to devise and carry out villainous plans [κ]. 191 *invention* inventive powers; power to make plans [κ]. 192 *means* wealth. 193 *reft* deprived. 194 *in such a kind* to such an extent. 195 *policy of mind* mental power in planning [κ].

To quit me of them thoroughly.

FRIAR.

Pause awhile

And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter here the princes left for dead,
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed;
Maintain a mourning ostentation,
And on your family's old monument
Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
That appertain unto a burial.

200

205

LEON.

What shall become of this? What will this do?

FRIAR.

Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
Change slander to remorse. That is some good.
But not for that dream I on this strange course,
But on this travail look for greater birth.
She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
Shall be lamented, pitied, and excus'd
Of every hearer; for it so falls out
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio.
When he shall hear she died upon his words,
Th' idea of her life shall sweetly creep

210

215

220

197 *quit me of them thoroughly* enable me to settle accounts with them thoroughly [k]. 198 *sway* govern. With the Friar's plan we may well compare the role of Friar Laurence in *ROMEO AND JULIET* [k]. 199 *princes* THEOBALD; Q, F¹: "princesse." 200 *in* at home. 202 *a mourning ostentation* a formal show of mourning rites. "Ostentation" suggests such an elaborate ceremony as might be expected in a family of very high rank [k]. 204 *Hang mournful epitaphs* Such was the custom in Shakespeare's day. See V.III. [k]. Verses or epitaphs were often affixed to the hearses of important persons. 206 *shall become* is to be the outcome. 207 *well carried* if well managed. 208 *remorse* compassion. 210 *on this travail* as a result of this effort. *look for greater birth* expect something more important than the mere change of slander to pity [k]. "Travail" often referred to "labour in childbirth." 211 *as it must be so maintain'd* as you must insist was the fact [k]. 214 *Of* by. 215 *to the worth* to its full value. 217 *rack the value* strain the valuation to the utmost limit [k]. The image is from stretching on the torture rack. 218 *virtue* excellence. 221 *Th' idea of her life* the thought

Into his study of imagination,
 And every lovely organ of her life
 Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
 More moving, delicate, and full of life, 225
 Into the eye and prospect of his soul
 Than when she liv'd indeed. Then shall he mourn
 (If ever love had interest in his liver)
 And wish he had not so accused her —
 No, though he thought his accusation true. 230
 Let this be so, and doubt not but success
 Will fashion the event in better shape
 Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
 But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
 The supposition of the lady's death 235
 Will quench the wonder of her infamy.
 And if it sort not well, you may conceal her,
 As best befits her wounded reputation,
 In some reclusive and religious life,
 Out of all eyes, tongues, minds, and injuries. 240

BENE. Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you;
 And though you know my inwardness and love
 Is very much unto the Prince and Claudio,
 Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
 As secretly and justly as your soul 245
 Should with your body.

LEON. Being that I flow in grief,

of her as she was when alive [κ]. 222 *Into his . . . imagination* into his imagination when he thinks of her [κ]. 223 *organ of her life* aspect of her when she was alive. 224 *precious habit* beautiful appearance (literally, "clothing"). 226 *the eye . . . soul* his soul's eye and imaginative sight [κ]. 228 *had interest in* could claim a share in [κ]. *liver* Thought in old times to be the seat of the passion of love [κ]. 231 *Let this be so* assume (as it is very likely) that what I have predicted comes true [κ]. *success* succeeding time. 232 *event* result. 234 *But . . . false* but if all my forecast should turn out to be mistaken except this point, this at least will be accomplished — the belief that Hero has died will make people cease to dwell upon her shame [κ]. *aim* guess, conjecture, forecast. *levell'd false* aimed amiss. 237 *it sort not well* my plan does not succeed. 239 *reclusive* cloistered — as the life of a nun [κ]. 242 *inwardness* intimacy. 246 *Should* certainly would. *Being . . . grief* since I am dissolved in tears and therefore have no strength left [κ].

The smallest twine may lead me.

FRIAR. 'Tis well consented. Presently away;
For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure.
Come, lady, die to live. This wedding day 250
Perhaps is but prolong'd. Have patience and endure.

Exeunt [all but Benedick and Beatrice].

BENE. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while?
BEAT. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.
BENE. I will not desire that.
BEAT. You have no reason. I do it freely. 255
BENE. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.
BEAT. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me that would
right her!
BENE. Is there any way to show such friendship?
BEAT. A very even way, but no such friend. 260
BENE. May a man do it?
BEAT. It is a man's office, but not yours.
BENE. I do love nothing in the world so well as you. Is not
that strange?
BEAT. As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible 265
for me to say I loved nothing so well as you. But believe
me not; and yet I lie not. I confess nothing, nor I deny
nothing. I am sorry for my cousin.
BENE. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.
BEAT. Do not swear, and eat it. 270

248 'Tis well consented you do well in consenting to my proposal [κ]. Presently without delay. 249 to strange . . . cure to cure strange maladies, they (people in general) use unusual remedies. 251 prolong'd merely put off (postponed) and not given up [κ]. 255 freely willingly — and therefore no request from you is needed [κ]. 260 even way level road, without obstacles. 265 As strange . . . not as much of a stranger as something that I am unacquainted with. Beatrice plays with the word "strange" [κ]. 266 I loved . . . as you Intentionally ambiguous: (a) I loved you more than I love anything else (b) I loved you no better than I love nothing at all [κ]. 270 Do not . . . eat it i.e. eat the words

- BENE. I will swear by it that you love me, and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.
- BEAT. Will you not eat your word?
- BENE. With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee. 275
- BEAT. Why then, God forgive me!
- BENE. What offence, sweet Beatrice?
- BEAT. You have stayed me in a happy hour. I was about to protest I loved you.
- BENE. And do it with all thy heart. 280
- BEAT. I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.
- BENE. Come, bid me do anything for thee.
- BEAT. Kill Claudio.
- BENE. Ha! not for the wide world! 285
- BEAT. You kill me to deny it. Farewell.
- BENE. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.
- BEAT. I am gone, though I am here. There is no love in you. Nay, I pray you let me go.
- BENE. Beatrice — 290
- BEAT. In faith, I will go.
- BENE. We'll be friends first.
- BEAT. You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.
- BENE. Is Claudio thine enemy? 295

of your assertion — take back (retract) your assertion that you love me, for it is false. Benedick understands her to mean “eat your sword,” and that phrase was undoubtedly also in her mind [κ]. 271–2 *make him eat it* i.e. eat my sword. To “make a man eat one’s sword” was a grotesque idiom for to “force him to submit or be killed” [κ]. 278 *stayed . . . hour* interrupted me at an opportune moment. 286 *to deny it* in refusing to do it (kill Claudio). 288 *I am gone . . . here* I have given you up as a lover and am as good as gone, although you are holding me here by force. Benedick is struggling to detain Beatrice, as the next line makes clear.

- BEAT. Is 'a not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman? O that I were a man! What? bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then with public accusation, uncover'd slander, unmitigated rancour — O God, that I 300 were a man! I would eat his heart in the market place.
- BENE. Hear me, Beatrice!
- BEAT. Talk with a man out at a window! — a proper saying!
- BENE. Nay, but Beatrice —
- BEAT. Sweet Hero! she is wrong'd, she is sland' red, she is un- 305 done.
- BENE. Beat —
- BEAT. Princes and Counties! Surely a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfect, a sweet gallant surely! O that I were a man for his sake! or that I had any 310 friend would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turn'd into tongue, and trim ones too. He is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie, and swears it. I cannot be a man with wishing; therefore I 315 will die a woman with grieving.
- BENE. Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.
- BEAT. Use it for my love some other way than swearing by it.
- BENE. Think you in your soul the Count Claudio hath wrong'd Hero? 320
- BEAT. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul.

296 *approved* proved to be. *in the height* to the utmost. 298 *bear her in hand* delude her. The phrase implies not a single act but a systematic course of deception [κ]. 299–300 *uncover'd* outspoken. 303 *proper saying* likely story. 305–6 *undone* ruined. 308–9 *a goodly count* A bitter pun: "A handsome count and a fine story" [κ]. 309 *Comfect* comfit, sweetmeat. 310 *for his sake* so as to give him what he deserves. 312 *compliment* formal, polite behaviour and speech. 313 *only . . . tongue* The implication is that men dare not fight in support of what they say. *trim ones too* fine tongues, fine talkers [κ]. 322 *I am engag'd* I pledge myself. 323–4 *Claudio shall . . . account* I will call Claudio to account and make him pay dear for his offence [κ].

IV.II. 1 *Dog* CAPELL; Q assigns Dogberry's speeches to Will Kempe, the actor

- DOG. Write down Master Gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God?
- BOTH. Yea, sir, we hope. 15
- DOG. Write down that they hope they serve God; and write God first, for God defend but God should go before such villains! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves, and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves? 20
- CON. Marry, sir, we say we are none.
- DOG. A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you; but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah. A word in your ear. Sir, I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.
- BORA. Sir, I say to you we are none. 25
- DOG. Well, stand aside. Fore God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down that they are none?
- SEX. Master Constable, you go not the way to examine. You must call forth the watch that are their accusers.
- DOG. Yea, marry, that's the efastest way. Let the watch come forth. Masters, I charge you in the Prince's name accuse these men. 30
1. WATCH. This man said, sir, that Don John the Prince's brother was a villain.
- DOG. Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain. 35
- BORA. Master Constable —
- DOG. Pray thee, fellow, peace. I do not like thy look, I promise thee.
- SEX. What heard you him say else? 40

17 *defend* forbid. 22-3 *go about with him* get around him, manage him. 26 *they are both in a tale* they both tell one and the same story [κ]. 30 *efatest* easiest, most convenient, quickest. The word is unknown elsewhere [κ]. 44 *by th' mass* F¹; Q: "by masse." 46 *upon his words* because of Borachio's story [κ]. 49-50 *redemption* for "damnation." 55 *refus'd* cast off (by Claudio). 59 *opinion'd* for "pinioned." To "pinion" a man is to tie his hands behind his

2. WATCH. Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.

DOG. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

VERG. Yea, by th' mass, that it is.

SEX. What else, fellow?

45

1. WATCH. And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

DOG. O villain! thou wilt be condemn'd into everlasting redemption for this.

50

SEX. What else?

WATCHMEN. This is all.

SEX. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stol'n away. Hero was in this manner accus'd, in this very manner refus'd, and upon the grief of this suddenly died. Master Constable, let these men be bound and brought to Leonato's. I will go before and show him their examination.

55

[Exit.]

DOG. Come, let them be opinion'd.

VERG. Let them be in the hands —

60

CON. Off, coxcomb!

DOG. God's my life, where's the sexton? Let him write down the Prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them. — Thou naughty varlet!

CON. Away! you are an ass, you are an ass.

65

DOG. Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect

back, or to tie his elbows together behind him [κ]. 60-1 Verg . . . *coxcomb* MALONE; Q: "Couley. Let them be in the hands of Coxcombe." *coxcomb* fool. Jesters wore in the cap a piece of red flannel imitating the comb of a cock [κ]. 64 *naughty* wicked. A strong adjective in Shakespeare's time — not, as nowadays, degraded to the language of the nursery or of mild humour [κ]. *varlet* fellow, rascal. 65 Con ROWE; Q, F¹: "Couley." 66 *suspect* for "respect." *place* position.

my years? O that he were here to write me down an ass!
 But, masters, remember that I am an ass. Though it be
 not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No,
 thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be prov'd 70
 upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow; and
 which is more, an officer; and which is more, a house-
 holder; and which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as
 any is in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to!
 and a rich fellow enough, go to! and a fellow that hath 75
 had losses; and one that hath two gowns and every-
 thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I
 had been write down an ass! *Exeunt.*

67 *he* the Sexton, who has just left. 70 *piety* for "impiety." 75-6 *that hath had losses* For a man who is still well-to-do to speak of his losses with a degree of self-complacency is a rather customary trick of human nature [κ]. Some editors would read "leases," a possible emendation although hardly necessary.

V.1. 2 *to second grief* to give way to grief and thus to aid and abet its effect upon you [κ]. 7 *whose . . . mine* whose misfortunes are comparable to mine [κ].

Act Five

[SCENE I. *The street, near Leonato's house.*]

Enter Leonato and his brother [Antonio].

ANT. If you go on thus, you will kill yourself,
And 'tis not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

LEON. I pray thee cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve. Give not me counsel, 5
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so lov'd his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak to me of patience. 10
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine,
And let it answer every strain for strain,
As thus for thus, and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form.
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard, 15

9 *Whose joy . . . mine* and whose delight in having her for his daughter has been so annihilated by losing her [κ]. 10 *patience* self-control. 12 *let it . . . for strain* let his sorrow match my sorrow in every point — feature for feature, trait for trait. The idea is fully expressed in line 14 [κ]. “Strain” is used in a double sense: (a) feeling (b) lamentation — the word being used in the musical sense. 15 *smile and . . . beard* like an aged philosopher [κ].

Bid sorrow wag, cry "hem" when he should groan,
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters — bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.

But there is no such man; for, brother, men 20
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptual medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread, 25
Charm ache with air and agony with words.
No, no! 'Tis all men's office to speak patience
To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
To be so moral when he shall endure 30
The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel.
My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

ANT. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

LEON. I pray thee peace. I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher 35
That could endure the toothache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods
And made a push at chance and sufferance.

ANT. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself.
Make those that do offend you suffer too. 40

LEON. There thou speak'st reason. Nay, I will do so.

16 *Bid* CAPELL; Q: "And." *wag* be off; go its way [κ]. *cry* . . . *groan* calmly clear his throat (a careless gesture of unconcern) rather than groan with grief. Leonato is describing the stoic ideal. 17 *Patch grief with proverbs* mend his grief by reciting scraps of proverbial wisdom. Such "wise saws" exist in abundance [κ]. 17-18 *make* . . . *candle-wasters* stupefy his sorrow by means of precepts derived from philosophers who spend the night hours in composing stoical treatises [κ]. 18 *yet* Emphatic: "after all," "even now, when I am overwhelmed with grief" [κ]. 22 *tasting it* when they feel it themselves. 23 *turns to passion* is transformed to passionate sorrow [κ]. 23-4 *which before* . . . *to rage* which — before they felt any sorrow themselves — undertook to cure the intensity of others' grief by mere consolatory precepts [κ]. 26 *air* mere breath, words. 27 *all men's office* everybody's service; something anybody and everybody is ready and able to do [κ]. 28 *wring* are writhing [κ]. 29-31 *But no man's* . . . *like himself* but no one has the strength or the ability to moralize in that fashion when he is doomed to suffer such sorrow himself [κ]. 32 *cry* . . . *advertisement*

My soul doth tell me Hero is belied;
And that shall Claudio know; so shall the Prince,
And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Enter Don Pedro and Claudio.

ANT. Here comes the Prince and Claudio hastily. 45

PEDRO. Good den, good den.

CLAUD. Good day to both of you.

LEON. Hear you, my lords!

PEDRO. We have some haste, Leonato.

LEON. Some haste, my lord! well, fare you well, my lord.
Are you so hasty now? Well, all is one.

PEDRO. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man. 50

ANT. If he could right himself with quarreling,
Some of us would lie low.

CLAUD. Who wrongs him?

LEON. Marry, thou dost wrong-me, thou dissembler, thou!
Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword;
I fear thee not.

CLAUD. Marry, beshrew my hand 55

If it should give your age such cause of fear.
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

LEON. Tush, tush, man! never flee and jest at me.
I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As under privilege of age to brag 60

are too intense to be pacified by mere advice [κ]. 37 *However . . . gods* no matter how godlike (and therefore superior to humanity) is the way in which they have expressed themselves in their writings [κ]. 38 *made a . . . sufferance* met misfortune and suffering with defiant courage. A "push" is an "attack," an "onset" [κ]. 39 *bend direct. upon* against. 42 *is belied* has been slandered. 45 *comes* A singular verb with two subjects is especially common when the verb comes first [κ]. 46 *Good den* good even, good afternoon. 49 *all is one* it makes no difference. 51 *right himself* restore himself to a condition of happiness. Claudio's question in line 52 shows that he does not understand Antonio's meaning [κ]. 55 *beshrew* curse. 57 *meant . . . sword* Leonato's excitement had caused Claudio instinctively to lay his hand upon his sword. He now disclaims any hostile intention: "My hand conveyed no meaning to my sword—did not suggest to my sword that I intended to draw it" [κ]. 58 *flee* jeer. 60 *under privilege of age* protected by the respect due to old age.

What I have done being young, or what would do,
 Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,
 Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me
 That I am forc'd to lay my reverence by
 And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days, 65
 Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
 I say thou hast belied mine innocent child;
 Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
 And she lies buried with her ancestors —
 O, in a tomb where never scandal slept, 70
 Save this of hers, fram'd by thy villainy!

CLAUD. My villainy?

LEON. Thine, Claudio; thine I say.

PEDRO. You say not right, old man.

LEON. My lord, my lord,
 I'll prove it on his body if he dare,
 Despite his nice fence and his active practice, 75
 His May of youth and bloom of lustihood.

CLAUD. Away! I will not have to do with you.

LEON. Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast kill'd my child.
 If thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

ANT. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed. 80
 But that's no matter; let him kill one first.
 Win me and wear me! Let him answer me.
 Come, follow me, boy. Come, sir boy, come follow me.
 Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence!
 Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will. 85

LEON. Brother —

62 *to thy head* challenging you directly. 64 *to lay my reverence by* to renounce the right which the customary respect for old age gives me — namely, the privilege of exemption from fighting duels [κ]. 65 *bruise* debility, wear and tear. 66 *to trial of a man* to a test of manhood — a duel. 75 *nice fence* dexterity in fencing [κ]. 76 *lustihood* vigour. 78 *daff me* put me aside. 82 *Win me and wear me* A common phrase, used either to call a man to action or to intimate that he cannot get the desired object without a contest: "Win it and it shall be yours to enjoy" [κ]. *answer me* meet me in response to my challenge. "Me" is emphatic [κ]. 84 *I'll whip . . . fence* I'll parry your fencing thrusts with a

- ANT. Content yourself. God knows I lov'd my niece,
And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue. 90
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops!
- LEON. Brother Anthony —
- ANT. Hold you content. What, man! I know them, yea,
And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,
Scambling, outfacing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie and cog and flout, deprave and slander, 95
Go anticly, show outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dang'rous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst;
And this is all.
- LEON. But, brother Anthony —
- ANT. Come, 'tis no matter. 100
Do not you meddle; let me deal in this.
- PEDRO. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
My heart is sorry for your daughter's death;
But, on my honour, she was charg'd with nothing
But what was true, and very full of proof. 105
- LEON. My lord, my lord —
- PEDRO. I will not hear you.
- LEON. No? Come, brother, away! — I will be heard.
- ANT. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

Exeunt ambo.

whip! That will be a sufficient weapon to use against a youngster like you [κ].
joining thrusting. 89 *answer a man indeed* stand their ground in opposition
 to a real man [κ]. 91 *Jacks rascals.* 93 *weigh* are worth. *scruple* the minutest
 possible measure of weight. 94 *Scambling* quarrelsome. *outfacing* impudent.
fashion-monging foppish. 95 *cog* cheat. *flout* jeer. *deprave and slander* Syn-
 onymous. 96 *Go anticly* swagger in fantastic attire [κ]. *outward hideousness*
 a frightening exterior. 100 *no matter* nothing for you to worry about. 101
deal in this manage this affair. 102 *we will . . . patience* we do not wish to
 disturb your serenity, i.e. to irritate you [κ].

Enter Benedick.

- PEDRO. See, see! Here comes the man we went to seek. 110
- CLAUD. Now, signior, what news?
- BENE. Good day, my lord.
- PEDRO. Welcome, signior. You are almost come to part almost a fray.
- CLAUD. We had lik'd to have had our two noses snapp'd off 115
with two old men without teeth.
- PEDRO. Leonato and his brother. What think'st thou? Had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.
- BENE. In a false quarrel there is no true valour. I came to seek 120
you both.
- CLAUD. We have been up and down to seek thee; for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit?
- BENE. It is in my scabbard. Shall I draw it? 125
- PEDRO. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?
- CLAUD. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels — draw to pleasure us.
- PEDRO. As I am an honest man, he looks pale. Art thou sick or 130
angry?

113-14 *You are . . . a fray* you arrive just too late to keep the peace in what was almost a brawl [κ]. 115 *had lik'd to have had* were likely to have; seemed to be on the point of having [κ]. 116 *with* by. 118 *doubt* suspect. *young* vigorous. 120 *false quarrel* quarrel in which one is not in the right. 122 *up and down* hither and yon. 123 *high-proof melancholy* melancholy in the highest degree. *fain* gladly. 124 *wit* cleverness of speech. 127-8 *beside their wit* out of their minds. 128 *draw . . . minstrels* Claudio puns on drawing one's wit (as if it were a sword) and drawing the bow (of a fiddle) [κ]. "Minstrels" were "musicians." 129 *pleasure us* give us pleasure. 132 *care kill'd a cat* even a cat. A proverbial phrase [κ]. 133 *mettle* vivacity, liveliness of mind [κ]. 134 *in the career* at full speed (an expression from tilting). 136 *another staff* another lance or shaft for a lance. The tilting metaphor is continued. 136-7 *broke cross* a complete failure. 140 *turn his girdle* i.e. be angry for all I care. "If you are angry, you may turn your girdle" is an old proverbial expression. It's

- CLAUD. What, courage, man! What though care kill'd a cat,
thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.
- BENE. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career an you charge
it against me. I pray you choose another subject. 135
- CLAUD. Nay then, give him another staff; this last was broke
cross.
- PEDRO. By this light, he changes more and more. I think he be
angry indeed.
- CLAUD. If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle. 140
- BENE. Shall I speak a word in your ear?
- CLAUD. God bless me from a challenge!
- BENE. [*aside to Claudio*] You are a villain. I jest not; I will
make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and
when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your 145
cowardice. You have kill'd a sweet lady, and her death
shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you.
- CLAUD. Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.
- PEDRO. What, a feast? a feast?
- CLAUD. I' faith, I thank him, he hath bid me to a calf's head 150
and a capon, the which if I do not carve most curiously,
say my knife's naught. Shall I not find a woodcock too?
- BENE. Sir, your wit ambles well; it goes easily.
- PEDRO. I'll tell thee how Beatrice prais'd thy wit the other day.

origin is doubtful, but it may have some relation to the sport of wrestling in which large belt (girdle) buckles were turned inward in preparing for a bout. 144 *how* in whatever way. 145 *Do me right* accept my challenge. *protest* proclaim publicly. 148 *so I may have good cheer* provided I may count on good fare. Claudio speaks as if he had been invited to a feast. He can hardly take Benedick's challenge seriously [κ]. 150 *calf's head* i.e. duel with a foolish fellow. 151 *capon* castrated rooster (another contemptuous epithet). *curiously* elaborately, skillfully. 152 *naught* of no value. *woodcock* Claudio is at a loss to understand Benedick's anger. The woodcock (though in fact an intelligent bird) was regarded as particularly stupid; it was even thought to have no brains [κ]. 154 *I'll tell thee how* They are still at cross purposes. Claudio cannot understand why he has been challenged; Don Pedro, who cannot imagine that Benedick is serious, continues in a jesting vein, with intent to further the projected match between Beatrice and Benedick, and Claudio goes on in the same tenour [κ].

I said thou hadst a fine wit: "True," said she, "a fine 155
 little one." "No," said I, "a great wit." "Right," says she,
 "a great gross one." "Nay," said I, "a good wit." "Just,"
 said she, "it hurts nobody." "Nay," said I, "the gentleman
 is wise." "Certain," said she, "a wise gentleman." "Nay,"
 said I, "he hath the tongues." "That I believe," said she, 160
 "for he swore a thing to me on Monday night which he
 forswore on Tuesday morning. There's a double tongue;
 there's two tongues." Thus did she an hour together
 transshape thy particular virtues. Yet at last she con-
 cluded with a sigh, thou wast the proper'st man in Italy. 165

CLAUD. For the which she wept heartily and said she cared not.

PEDRO. Yea, that she did; but yet, for all that, an if she did not
 hate him deadly, she would love him dearly. The old
 man's daughter told us all.

CLAUD. All, all! and moreover, God saw him when he was hid 170
 in the garden.

PEDRO. But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the
 sensible Benedick's head?

CLAUD. Yea, and text underneath, "Here dwells Benedick, the
 married man"? 175

BENE. Fare you well, boy; you know my mind. I will leave you
 now to your gossiplike humour. You break jests as brag-
 gards do their blades, which God be thanked hurt not.
 My lord, for your many courtesies I thank you. I must
 discontinue your company. Your brother the bastard is 180
 fled from Messina. You have among you kill'd a sweet
 and innocent lady. For my Lord Lackbeard there, he

157 *a great gross one* a great one, if by "great" you mean "coarse," "stupid" [κ].
Just quite so. 159 *wise gentleman* smart aleck. 160 *hath the tongues* speaks
 foreign languages. 162 *forswore* denied with an oath. *double* deceitful. 164
transshape transform. *thy particular* thy own personal. 165 *proper'st* most
 handsome. 167-8 *an if . . . dearly* The saying is a proverbial one. 170-1
God saw him . . . garden See GENESIS, III, 8. Benedick is too angry to see the
 point [κ]. 172-3 *when shall . . . head* when shall we see Benedick married?
 Once more the everlasting jest about the cuckold's horns [κ]. 176 *my mind*
 what I think (of you). 177 *to your gossiplike humour* to the enjoyment of your
 whimsical frame of mind, which is about as sensible as that of a chattering old

and I shall meet; and till then peace be with him.

[*Exit.*]

PEDRO. He is in earnest.

CLAUD. In most profound earnest; and, I'll warrant you, for the 185
love of Beatrice.

PEDRO. And hath challeng'd thee.

CLAUD. Most sincerely.

PEDRO. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet
and hose and leaves off his wit! 190

*Enter Constables [Dogberry and Verges,
with the Watch, leading] Conrade and
Borachio.*

CLAUD. He is then a giant to an ape; but then is an ape a doctor
to such a man.

PEDRO. But, soft you, let me be! Pluck up, my heart, and be
sad! Did he not say my brother was fled?

DOG. Come you, sir. If justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er 195
weigh more reasons in her balance. Nay, an you be a
cursing hypocrite once, you must be look'd to.

PEDRO. How now? two of my brother's men bound? Borachio
one.

CLAUD. Hearken after their offence, my lord. 200

PEDRO. Officers, what offence have these men done?

DOG. Marry, sir, they have committed false report; moreover,
they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slan-
ders; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly,

woman [κ]. *break jests* make jokes at other persons' expense [κ]. 177-8 *as brag-gards do their blades* i.e. in sham fights, undertaken merely to show off and in-volving do danger [κ]. 182 *For* as for. 183 *meet* in a duel. 189-90 *What a pretty . . . his wit* what a figure a man makes when he walks about in his ordinary attire but has neglected to put on his common sense along with his clothes [κ]. 191 *to* in comparison with. 191-2 *a doctor* to a wise man when compared with. 193 *my heart* my good fellow. 194 *sad* serious. 195-6 *she shall . . . her balance* she will nevermore be able to weigh law cases in her scales. Dogberry misuses "reasons" (which often means "causes") in the sense of "cases at law" [κ]. The scales of justice are proverbial.

they have verified unjust things; and to conclude, they 205
are lying knaves.

PEDRO. First, I ask thee what they have done; thirdly, I ask thee
what's their offence; sixth and lastly, why they are
committed; and to conclude, what you lay to their
charge. 210

CLAUD. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division; and by my
troth there's one meaning well suited.

PEDRO. Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus
bound to your answer? This learned constable is too
cunning to be understood. What's your offence? 215

BORA. Sweet Prince, let me go no farther to mine answer. Do
you hear me, and let this Count kill me. I have deceived
even your very eyes. What your wisdoms could not dis-
cover, these shallow fools have brought to light, who in
the night overheard me confessing to this man, how Don 220
John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady
Hero; how you were brought into the orchard and saw
me court Margaret in Hero's garments; how you dis-
grac'd her when you should marry her. My villainy they
have upon record, which I had rather seal with my 225
death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead
upon mine and my master's false accusation; and briefly,
I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

PEDRO. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

CLAUD. I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it. 230

PEDRO. But did my brother set thee on to this?

BORA. Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

PEDRO. He is compos'd and fram'd of treachery,

205 *verified* asserted as truth. 209 *committed* arrested and held for trial. 211 *division* method of dividing up and arranging the subject matter [K]. 212 *one meaning well suited* one single idea dressed up in becoming terms. Don Pedro has "asked the question in four modes of speech" (Johnson) [K]. 214 *bound to your answer* indicted. 215 *cunning* subtle in his use of language. 216 *let me . . . answer* let me confess and be punished here and now. "Answer" is used in two senses (a) answer to your question and (b) answering for my crime

And fled he is upon this villainy.

CLAUD. Sweet Hero, now thy image doth appear 235
In the rare semblance that I lov'd it first.

DOG. Come, bring away the plaintiffs. By this time our sexton
hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter. And,
masters, do not forget to specify, when time and place
shall serve, that I am an ass. 240

VERG. Here, here comes Master Signior Leonato, and the
sexton too.

*Enter Leonato, his brother [Antonio],
and the Sexton.*

LEON. Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes,
That, when I note another man like him,
I may avoid him. Which of these is he? 245

BORA. If you would know your wronger, look on me.

LEON. Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast kill'd
Mine innocent child?

BORA. Yea, even I alone.

LEON. No, not so, villain! thou beliest thyself.
Here stand a pair of honourable men — 250
A third is fled — that had a hand in it.
I thank you princes for my daughter's death.
Record it with your high and worthy deeds.
'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

CLAUD. I know not how to pray your patience; 255
Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself;

(paying the penalty) [K]. 221 *incensed* incited, suborned. 224 *should marry* were to have married. 227 *upon* as the result of. 232 *for the practice of it* for forming and carrying out the plot [K]. 233 *compos'd and fram'd* Synonymous. 236 *that* in which. 237 *plaintiffs* for "defendants." 238 *reformed* for "informed." 247 *breath* words—false report. 254 *'Twas bravely done* it was a magnificent act. *bethink you of it* remember having done it. 255 *pray your patience* beg you to hear me calmly. "Patience" is a trisyllable here [K].

Impose me to what penance your invention
Can lay upon my sin. Yet sinn'd I not
But in mistaking.

PEDRO.

By my soul, nor I!

And yet, to satisfy this good old man, 260
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he'll enjoin me to.

LEON.

I cannot bid you bid my daughter live —
That were impossible; but I pray you both, 265
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died; and if your love
Can labour aught in sad invention,
Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
And sing it to her bones — sing it to-night.
To-morrow morning come you to my house, 270
And since you could not be my son-in-law,
Be yet my nephew. My brother hath a daughter,
Almost the copy of my child that's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us.
Give her the right you should have giv'n her cousin, 275
And so dies my revenge.

CLAUD.

O noble sir!

Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me.
I do embrace your offer; and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

LEON.

To-morrow then I will expect your coming; 280
To-night I take my leave. This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,

257 *Impose* sentence. *invention* imagination — power to conceive. 265 *Possess* inform. 267 *Can labour* . . . *invention* can compose any work of imagination to express sorrow — i.e. write a funeral poem. 274 *she alone is heir to both of us* But, as a matter of fact, Antonio has a son (see I.ii.1). The inconsistency is not explained by supposing that Leonato's statement is "part of his fiction" for that son is not away from home, and Leonato's guests must have made his acquaintance already [κ]. This is but one of many slight inconsistencies in the play which would never bother a theatre audience. 275 *the right* i.e. to be your wife (with a possible glance at the "marriage rite"). 278 *dispose* dispose you (imperative). 281 *naughty* evil. Much stronger than in modern usage. 283 *pack'd in all this wrong* an accomplice in this whole conspiracy. "Packing" is a synonym for "plotting" [κ]. 286 *just* good, righteous. 287 *by her* about her.

Who I believe was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hir'd to it by your brother.

BORA.

No, by my soul, she was not;

Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me; 285
But always hath been just and virtuous
In anything that I do know by her.

DOG.

Moreover, sir, which indeed is not under white and
black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me ass.
I beseech you let it be rememb'ed in his punishment. 290
And also the watch heard them talk of one Deformed.
They say he wears a key in his ear, and a lock hanging
by it, and borrows money in God's name, the which he
hath us'd so long and never paid that now men grow
hard-hearted and will lend nothing for God's sake. Pray 295
you examine him upon that point.

LEON.

I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

DOG.

Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverent
youth, and I praise God for you.

LEON.

There's for thy pains.

[Gives money.] 300

DOG.

God save the foundation!

LEON.

Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I thank thee.

DOG.

I leave an arrant knave with your worship, which I
beseech your worship to correct yourself, for the ex-
ample of others. God keep your worship! I wish your 305
worship well. God restore you to health! I humbly give
you leave to depart; and if a merry meeting may be
wish'd, God prohibit it! Come, neighbour.

288-9 *under white and black* written down in white and black. 292 *a key* Doubtless the "lock" (III.III.152) suggested the key to Dogberry's logical mind [κ]. 293 *borrows . . . name* like a beggar, who asks alms "for God's sake" [κ]. 293-4 *the which . . . long* which habit he has so long practised [κ]. 295 *nothing* i.e. either to him or to anybody [κ]. 298 *reverent* Probably Dogberry actually means "reverent," though the word is very common in the sense of "reverend" [κ]. 301 *God save the foundation* An expression regularly used by beggars receiving alms at the gates of religious houses. 302 *discharge thee of* free thee of further responsibility for. Leonato, being a magistrate, takes charge of the prisoner [κ]. 304 *correct* punish. 305 *keep* protect. 307-8 *if a merry . . . prohibit it* Doubtless he means, "God grant we may meet again on a more cheerful occasion" [κ].

- BENE. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth — it catches.
- MARG. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit but hurt not. 10
- BENE. A most manly wit, Margaret: it will not hurt a woman. And so I pray thee call Beatrice. I give thee the bucklers.
- MARG. Give us the swords; we have bucklers of our own.
- BENE. If you use them, Margaret, you must put in the pikes with a vice, and they are dangerous weapons for maids. 15
- MARG. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs.
- BENE. And therefore will come. *Exit Margaret.*
 [Sings.]
 That sits above
 The god of love,
 And knows me, and knows me,
 How pitiful I deserve —
 I mean in singing; but in loving Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of panders, and a whole book full of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose name yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse — why, they were never so truly turn'd over and over as my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme. I have tried. I can find out no rhyme to "lady" but "baby" — an innocent rhyme; for "scorn," "horn" — a hard rhyme; for "school," "fool" — a babbling rhyme: very ominous endings! No, I was not born 20 25 30

(1584). 22 *pitiful I deserve* I deserve pity (for my unrequited love). 23 *in singing* Benedick takes the last line of the stanza to mean "how poor my deserts are" — what a poor singer I am. *Leander* the lover who drowned while swimming the Hellespont to be with his beloved (also named "Hero"), a supreme example of fidelity in love. 24 *Troilus* another such prototype of the faithful lover. 25 *quondam* ancient. *carpet-mongers* "Carpet knight" is an old satirical term for one who has been dubbed knight without having done military service. Benedick applies a similar term to all the famous lovers of antiquity, for, he asserts, they were only triflers in comparison with himself [k]. 28–9 *show it in rhyme* The Elizabethan lover was expected to express his passion in verse. 30 *innocent* foolish.

under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms.

Enter Beatrice.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I call'd thee? 35

BEAT. Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

BENE. O, stay but till then!

BEAT. "Then" is spoken. Fare you well now. And yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is, with knowing what hath pass'd between you and Claudio. 40

BENE. Only foul words; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

BEAT. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome. Therefore I will depart unkiss'd.

BENE. Thou hast frighted the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge; and either I must shortly hear from him or I will subscribe him a coward. And I pray thee now tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me? 50

BEAT. For them all together, which maintain'd so politic a state of evil that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

BENE. Suffer love! — a good epithet. I do suffer love indeed, for I love thee against my will. 55

33 *festival* suitable for a holiday — finely embellished. 39 *with that* with what. *came for* ROWE; Q: "came." 41 *thereupon* on account of that — i.e. I claim a kiss as my reward for challenging him [κ]. 43 *noisome* odorous, foul-smelling. 45 *right sense* proper meaning. 47 *undergoes* has been subjected to. 48 *subscribe* publicly proclaim. 51-2 *maintain'd . . . evil* maintained so well-organized a condition of badness. The use of "politic" shows that there is a shadowy pun on "state" in the sense of "a political organization" [κ]. 55 *epithet* phrase. 57 *In spite of* (a) despite (b) in order to spite. Beatrice puns on both meanings. 61 *It appears . . . confession* this declaration — that you are wise — does not show wisdom, for self-praise is not a wise man's habit. "Self-praise goes but little ways" is a proverb that may still be heard in New England [κ]. 63-4 *old instance . . .*

- BEAT. In spite of your heart, I think. Alas, poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours, for I will never love that which my friend hates.
- BENE. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably. 60
- BEAT. It appears not in this confession. There's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.
- BENE. An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that liv'd in the time of good neighbours. If a man do not erect in this age his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps. 65
- BEAT. And how long is that, think you?
- BENE. Question: why, an hour in clamour and a quarter in rheum. Therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm (his conscience) find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy. And now tell me, how doth your cousin? 70
- BEAT. Very ill. 75
- BENE. And how do you?
- BEAT. Very ill too.
- BENE. Serve God, love me, and mend. There will I leave you too, for here comes one in haste.

Enter Ursula.

- URS. Madam, you must come to your uncle. Yonder's old coil 80 at home. It is proved my Lady Hero hath been falsely

good neighbours that maxim about self-praise that you quote is an obsolete doctrine. It was current—and had some truth in it—in the good old times, when a man's neighbours were ready to commend his good qualities [κ]. 65–6 *live . . . monument* have no monument that shall keep his memory alive [κ]. 66 *bell passing bell*. 68 *clamour* the sound of the passing bell. 169 *rheum* tears (wept by his widow). 70 *Don Worm* Conscience is often conceived of metaphorically as a gnawing worm by the Elizabethans. 71 *trumpet* trumpeter, announcer. *virtues* fine qualities. 78 *mend* recover from your illness. Benedick implies that his prescription ("Serve God, love me") will effect a rapid recovery [κ]. 80 *old coil* a great hubbub.

Upon the error that you heard debated.
 But Margaret was in some fault for this,
 Although against her will, as it appears 5
 In the true course of all the question.

ANT. Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

BENE. And so am I, being else by faith enforc'd
 To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

LEON. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all, 10
 Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
 And when I send for you, come hither mask'd.

Exeunt Ladies.

The Prince and Claudio promis'd by this hour
 To visit me. You know your office, brother:
 You must be father to your brother's daughter, 15
 And give her to young Claudio.

ANT. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.

BENE. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

FRIAR. To do what, signior?

BENE. To bind me, or undo me — one of them. 20
 Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
 Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

LEON. That eye my daughter lent her. 'Tis most true.

BENE. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

LEON. The sight whereof I think you had from me, 25
 From Claudio, and the Prince; but what's your will?

BENE. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical;

V.iv. 3 *Upon* because of. 5 *against her will* unintentionally. 6 *question* investigation. 7 *sort* turn out. 8 *else by faith enforc'd* otherwise obliged by my pledge (to Beatrice). 14 *your office* your duty; the part you have to act [K]. 17 *with confirm'd countenance* with steadfast looks and demeanour. "Countenance" often means "bearing," "behaviour." It is not confined to "expression of the face" [K]. 18 *entreat your pains* ask for your services. 20 *undo* ruin — with an obvious pun [K]. 25-6 *The sight* . . . Prince Benedick looks upon Beatrice with love, Leonato thinks, because he has overheard the conversation at II.iii.84ff. 28 *for as for*. 29 *stand* agree, accord. 38 *Ethiope* black woman, considered ugly in

But, for my will, my will is, your good will
 May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
 In the state of honourable marriage;
 In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

30

LEON. My heart is with your liking.

FRIAR. And my help.

*Enter Don Pedro and Claudio and two
 or three others.*

Here comes the Prince and Claudio.

PEDRO. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

LEON. Good morrow, Prince; good morrow, Claudio.
 We here attend you. Are you yet determin'd
 To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

35

CLAUD. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.

LEON. Call her forth, brother. Here's the friar ready.

[*Exit Antonio.*]

PEDRO. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what's the matter
 That you have such a February face,
 So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?

40

CLAUD. I think he thinks upon the savage bull.
 Tush, fear not, man! We'll tip thy horns with gold,
 And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
 As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
 When he would play the noble beast in love.

45

BENE. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low,
 And some such strange bull leap'd your father's cow

Shakespeare's day, since only blondes were considered beautiful. 41 *a February face* Since their quarrel has not yet officially been settled, Benedick still frowns at Claudio and Don Pedro. 43 *the savage bull* Cf. I.1.218-24. 45 *Europa* Europe. 46-7 *As once . . . in love* The tale of Jupiter and Europa was one of the most popular of all mythological love stories. Shakespeare of course read it in Ovid when he was a schoolboy (METAMORPHOSES, II, 823ff.) [K]. Europa was wooed by Jupiter in the form of a bull and carried off upon his back. 48-51 *Bull Jove . . . his bleat* Benedick is calling Claudio both a bastard and a calf.

And got a calf in that same noble feat 50
 Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

*Enter [Leonato's] brother [Antonio],
 Hero, Beatrice, Margaret, Ursula, [the
 ladies wearing masks].*

CLAUD. For this I owe you. Here comes other reck'nings.
 Which is the lady I must seize upon?

ANT. This same is she, and I do give you her.

CLAUD. Why then, she's mine. Sweet, let me see your face. 55

LEON. No, that you shall not till you take her hand
 Before this friar and swear to marry her.

CLAUD. Give me your hand before this holy friar.
 I am your husband if you like of me.

HERO. And when I liv'd I was your other wife; [Unmasks.] 60
 And when you lov'd you were my other husband.

CLAUD. Another Hero!

HERO. Nothing certainer.
 One Hero died defil'd; but I do live,
 And surely as I live, I am a maid.

PEDRO. The former Hero! Hero that is dead! 65

LEON. She died, my lord, but whiles her slander liv'd.

FRIAR. All this amazement can I qualify,
 When, after that the holy rites are ended,
 I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death.
 Meantime let wonder seem familiar, 70
 And to the chapel let us presently.

BENE. Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice?

52 *For this . . . reck'nings* I must postpone the payment of that gibe of yours. Here come other accounts that I must settle first [κ]. 59 *like of me* like me; are satisfied to take me [κ]. 63 *defil'd* disgraced. 66 *but whiles* merely so long as. 67 *amazement* A very strong word: "all this stupefying maze of wonder in which you find yourself" [κ]. *qualify* modify, lessen, relieve. 69 *largely* in full. 70 *let wonder seem familiar* treat all these marvels as if they were ordinary matters; do not let them disturb you [κ]. 71 *presently* at once. 72 *Soft and fair* wait a moment — literally, "go slowly and easily" [κ]. 76 *for they swore* CAPELL; Q:

- BEAT. [unmasks] I answer to that name. What is your will?
- BENE. Do not you love me?
- BEAT. Why, no; no more than reason.
- BENE. Why, then your uncle, and the Prince, and Claudio 75
Have been deceived; for they swore you did.
- BEAT. Do not you love me?
- BENE. Troth, no; no more than reason.
- BEAT. Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula
Are much deceiv'd; for they did swear you did.
- BENE. They swore that you were almost sick for me. 80
- BEAT. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.
- BENE. 'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love me?
- BEAT. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.
- LEON. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentleman.
- CLAUD. And I'll be sworn upon't that he loves her; 85
For here's a paper written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashion'd to Beatrice.
- HERO. And here's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stol'n from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick. 90
- BENE. A miracle! Here's our own hands against our hearts.
Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee
for pity.
- BEAT. I would not deny you; but, by this good day, I yield
upon great persuasion, and partly to save your life, for 95

"they swore." 82 *no such matter* nothing of the kind. 83 *but . . . recompense* only as a friend loves a friend [κ]. 87 *halting* limping. Despite his confessed lack of skill in rhyming (V.ii.28ff.), Benedick has so far yielded to custom as to compose a love sonnet, but he has not ventured to show it to Beatrice [κ]. *of his own pure brain* purely of his own invention [κ]. 91 *our own . . . hearts* our own handwriting to give evidence to prove our hearts guilty of love [κ]. 94 *deny* refuse. 95 *upon* because of.

I was told you were in a consumption.

BENE. Peace! I will stop your mouth. [Kisses her.]

PEDRO. How dost thou, Benedick, the married man?

BENE. I'll tell thee what, Prince: a college of wit-crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost thou think I care 100
for a satire or an epigram? No. If a man will be beaten with brains, 'a shall wear nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do purpose to marry, I will think nothing to any purpose that the world can say against it; and therefore never flout at me for what I have said against 105
it; for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion. For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee; but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live unbruis'd, and love my cousin.

CLAUD. I had well hop'd thou wouldst have denied Beatrice, 110
that I might have cudgell'd thee out of thy single life, to make thee a double-dealer, which out of question thou wilt be if my cousin do not look exceeding narrowly to thee.

BENE. Come, come, we are friends. Let's have a dance ere we 115
are married, that we may lighten our own hearts and our wives' heels.

LEON. We'll have dancing afterward.

BENE. First, of my word! Therefore play, music. Prince, thou art sad. Get thee a wife, get thee a wife! There is no staff 120
more reverent than one tipp'd with horn.

Enter Messenger.

96 *in a consumption* in a decline — wasting away with lovesickness [κ]. 97 *Peace . . . mouth* THEOBALD; Q gives the line to Leonato. 99 *college* assembly. *wit-crackers* fellows who crack jokes [κ]. 100 *flout* jeer. *humour* whim, inclination. 101-2 *If a man . . . about him* no man who is so weak as to allow mere witticism to give him a thrashing will ever be able to wear good clothes without having them spoiled by beating [κ]. 104 *to any purpose* of any consequence. 106 *my conclusion* my final purpose. 108 *in that* inasmuch as. *like* likely. 112 *a double-dealer* The pun is complicated, but obvious enough: "To make thee cease

MESS. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with armed men back to Messina.

BENE. Think not on him till to-morrow. I'll devise thee brave
punishments for him. Strike up, pipers! 125

Dance. [Exeunt.]

to be a 'single man' by forcing thee to marry—and that would make thee a double-dealer, since I am sure thou wilt be an unfaithful husband unless," etc. [K]. 113-14 *narrowly* closely. 120 *sad* sober, serious. *staff* (a) walking stick (b) staff of office. 121 *reverent* reverend, worthy of honour [K]. *tipp'd with horn* Walking sticks used by elderly people were often tipped with horn, a fact which Benedick turns to a final joke about the cuckold's horns. 122 *is ta'en* has been captured. 123 *with* by. 124 *brave* splendid.